

A co-publication of the Ontario
Institute for Studies in Education
and Nelson Canada

\$1 million fire at school was arson

By PAUL MOLONEY
STAFF REPORTER

A fire that an official says was deliberately set caused up to \$1 million damage to the resource centre, which housed a mom-and-pop business.

It could take months to repair the resource centre, which housed a mom-and-pop business.

The early morning blaze yesterday destroyed the community centre at Daystric School, gutted eight rooms and ruined the gym's wood floor.

Fire officials are saying it's arson, and that more than 40 firefighters were on the scene for two hours to contain the fire.

Schoolyard bullies

By GREG ANDERSON
SPECIAL TO THE ST/

Bullying can lead to all sorts of violence behavior - from sudden death to suicide.

One of the greatest fears of a parent is that his or her child is being bullied on the playground or on the school. Unfortunately, bullying is a part of school life as

Schools target racism

By RITA DALY
EDUCATION REPORTER

All Toronto public schools are clamping down on racism among students this year.

"We have to be clear about it: we won't tolerate that kind of hate-motivated display," Dorothy Gossling, Toronto

There have been no arrests in the incident.

Toronto board chairperson David Moll said he can see banning a swastika, but was concerned that banning certain color shoe laces might be too far.

Parents, students told to get involved

Canadian Press

As many as 100 parents have been summoned to a meeting to discuss the school's plan to get parents and students more involved in the school's anti-racism efforts.

SAFE SCHOOLS

Students targeted in stabbing at school

An 18-year-old youth remains in custody today after being charged with attempted murder in the stabbing of a fellow Grade 12 student in a Richmond Hill school.

The 17-year-old victim was stabbed in the chest during a fight in the schoolyard.

A Special Report of the Task Force

A co-publication of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Nelson Canada

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

This issue of *Orbit* revisits a continuing topic of concern in Ontario education — violence in schools. Our March 1993 issue explored the roots of the problem in schools and society. This issue takes a more practical, strategic approach focussing on the policies and programs that are now in place to foster and maintain a safe school environment.

Our Guest Editor is Stu Auty who is on secondment from the Peel Board of Education as Chair of the Safe School Task Force. The commitment to partnerships which has characterized the Task Force is reflected in this issue of *Orbit*. Our traditional partnership among school boards and Ministry officials, OISE faculty and students, school administrators and classroom teachers has been extended to include community workers, youth and health care professionals, community police representatives, legal experts and architects. We are pleased with the variety, depth, and breadth of the contributions.

Among the features of the issue is a discussion panel of Directors of Education of four Greater Metropolitan Toronto school districts. This discussion demonstrates their commitment to the safe school project which is widespread in the province. Statements by Minister of Education and Training Dave Cooke and Solicitor General David Christopherson demonstrate their commitment to safe schools and reinforce the partnership of schools, educational systems, and community agencies in addressing this problem. OISE is pleased to have provided a forum for these discussions and resources.

Arthur Kruger

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SAFE SCHOOLS

A Special Report of the Task Force

Stuart Auty, Guest Editor

*Chair, Safe School Task Force,
Executive Director of the Canadian
Association For Safe Schools*

In the spring of 1990, in response to several years of mounting concerns about school violence on the part of the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council, the Safe School Task Force was launched. Its mandate was to take a hard look at the troublesome issue of violence in Ontario schools. The Task Force has since developed into a coalition of groups, agencies, ministries, police forces, faculties of education, and teacher federations, numbering some 38 at the time of this writing. Its focus is the development and maintenance of safe schools.

The big fear from the outset, and it still remains, is that Canadian schools will come to replicate their U.S. inner-city counterparts. This fear is shared by the professional educator and the general public. In January 1991, a Decima research poll found that the majority of Canadians wanted security guards in schools. As we developed the Task Force, the challenge facing us was to address this problem without inflaming it, to get educators and the public alike to realize that solutions would be complex and problematic. Our primary objective has been to develop awareness that school violence is societal in nature and not just the responsibility of educators to sort out in some form of aggravated isolation. We have focussed on contributing factors and preventative strategies helpful to the maintenance of safe schools.

This issue of *Orbit*, OISE's magazine for teachers, has given us an opportunity to examine school violence from a variety of perspectives. We have worked hard at presenting a balance between intervention and prevention.

Section One focusses on the violence prevention initiatives of the Ministry of

Education and Training. The data collection instrument developed as part of the new guidelines provides us with a basis for factual information. Although their numbers are dwindling, we still hear the occasional critic of the safe school process, debating the real or imagined extent of school violence and whether the issue has been a fabrication of media hype. It is the recognition that the safe schools

city problem. Information can be gleaned from boards boasting large personnel pools, and that was our attempt. Safe schools is a provincial issue and it is important to note that many boards of education have developed and implemented a wide variety of violence prevention policies over the years.

In Section Three, a variety of voices — students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and trustees — provide a cross-sectional perspective on the problem of violence within the schools. The look at school architecture provides a very pragmatic approach to some of the concerns raised, while the Ontario-wide employee survey underscores that schools in Ontario are still considered safe places. Warning signs, however, are apparent, and provide a strong rationale for the current government focus.

Section Four starts and ends with a discussion of the underlying causes of youth violence. It also profiles some exemplary programs ranging from anti-bullying to schools sports protocol. The Youth Leadership Program, for youth-at-risk, is of particular significance to me as a success story developed by the Task Force in partnership with a variety of organizations.

Finally, Section Five presents the legal framework for the safe school issue and then highlights some of the school-police partnerships underway in the province. A message from the Solicitor General recognizes the importance of a strong working relationship between police and schools. There is a growing demand for community policing and The Metro Toronto Street Crime Unit and Student Crime Stopper programs are examples.

I hope you find this safe schools issue worthwhile. I appreciated helping to produce it and thank OISE's Director Arthur Kruger and the *Orbit* editorial staff for the opportunity and collaboration.



“We have
worked hard

at presenting a balance
between intervention and
prevention.”

— Stuart Auty

project is a government priority that is important. The safe school process that is underway has now a legitimacy and support that will continue to pay dividends as the years unfold.

Section Two features a panel of Directors of Education where we probed for some personal thoughts and discussed a number of school board initiatives in the greater Metro Toronto area. The section also includes profiles of several safe school policies. This is not a definitive list, nor is it to say that the issue of school violence is strictly a big-

Ontario's Violence-Free Schools Policy

Many people have told us that *Violence-Free Schools Policy* should be a model for school boards across the country because it is unique in its form and message.

An Action Plan for Schools Free of Violence

School boards are now developing or reviewing their violence-prevention policies, implementation plans, and procedures for reporting and recording violent incidents. By June 30, 1995, they must send their policies, procedures, and implementation plans, along with information on how they involved their communities, to their appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training. All policies must be in place by September 1995.

Dave Cooke

Minister of Education and Training

As Minister of Education and Training, I frequently receive letters from parents, teachers, and students. A common theme in their correspondence last year was that some Ontario schools are no longer safe. Such a concern could not be ignored. It needed immediate action. As a result, in November 1993, I announced a plan to address the issue of violence in Ontario schools.

Three assumptions underlay the plan:

- that, as a society, we are not prepared to tolerate violence in our schools
- that we know the causes of violence are complex — but not too complex for us to deal with
- that we are determined to work together to prevent violence and make sure that our schools are safe places for learning and working

When I explained that we would adopt a “zero tolerance” policy towards violence in schools, I made it clear that violent acts in Ontario schools should be handled in a firm and consistent way. Students must understand that violent acts will have consequences. In the most

severe cases, this could be expulsion. In other cases, the consequences will be tailored to the nature of the incident.

In the 1992/93 school year, 24 students were expelled from school in Ontario for violent behaviour. We cannot simply abandon these students. All young people have a right to an education, and we must take into account the fact that many violent students are themselves the victims of abuse, racism, or damaging family situations. Now there is an alternative to expulsion. The Ministry of Education and Training has set up a pilot program with the Metropolitan Toronto School Board to provide schooling for expelled students. It's an imaginative undertaking in which students will get individualized help, but will have to earn their way back into the regular classroom. This program should provide useful information to school boards throughout Ontario, as they design their own programs.

Although the question of how to deal with violent behaviour is important, the real key to the Ministry's action plan is violence prevention. Our action plan for violence-free schools focusses on developing violence prevention policies at the provincial and school board levels, and ultimately at individual schools. It was designed with input from many concerned groups — parents, students, trustees,

supervisory officers, teachers' federation representatives, representatives from community organizations, and experts in violence prevention.

During the spring of 1994, the ministry held 18 community meetings across the province — from Thunder Bay to Kingston — to discuss ideas for violence prevention. The result was the Ministry's *Violence-Free Schools Policy*, which was released and distributed in June 1994, to all school boards and interested groups.

Many people have told us that *Violence-Free Schools Policy* should be a model for school boards across the country because it is unique in its form and message. I am proud of it, both for its content as well as for the process that it exemplifies.

Violence-Free Schools Policy has two parts. Part One provides a sound framework to school boards for developing their own violence prevention policies. School boards must consider the following things in their policies:

- the school environment, including the building and its surroundings, should be safe and welcoming
- violence prevention must be incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum for students from Junior Kindergarten to the end of secondary school
- school boards should ensure that children at risk of being bullies and/or victims are identified and helped at the earliest possible stage
- every elementary and secondary school must have a code of behaviour that is approved by the board; this code must explain to all members of the school community the types of behaviour expected from them
- school boards must develop procedures for dealing with the range of violent incidents that might occur in the school environment, including incidents that might involve students, staff, or visitors
- short- and long-term strategies should be developed to deal with the aftermath of a violent incident; these strategies should promote the healing of victims, the rehabilitation of perpetrators, and the well-being of the school

- staff should be given opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to develop and maintain a violence-free school environment
- parents, students, all staff, and community agencies should be involved in the writing and implementation of boards' violence-prevention policies

Part Two of *Violence-Free Schools Policy* gives clear directions to school boards for reporting violent incidents to the police and the Ministry of Education and Training and for recording violent incidents. The purpose of reporting suspensions and expulsions to the Ministry is to give us more information about what is happening in our schools. We have been hampered by poor or non-existent data on the frequency of violence in Ontario schools and how violence has been handled.

Serious violent incidents must be reported to the police when students are 12 years of age or older. For students under the age of 12 years, each individual violent incident should continue to be judged on its own merits. The decision to report to the police should be made locally. Incidents that must be reported to police for students 12 years of age or older include: possession of weapons (e.g., guns, knives); threats of serious physical injury; physical assaults causing serious bodily harm; sexual assault; robbery and extortion; any hate-motivated violence (e.g., incidents involving racism, homophobia); and vandalism causing extensive damage to school property or property located on school premises.

Such incidents must also be recorded on a student's Ontario Student Record so that school boards do not unknowingly admit students with violent histories.

I know that violence in schools cannot be viewed in isolation. It is a reflection of a larger social problem. Statistics show that many young people experience or witness violence in their own families, and see numerous acts of violence on television. It is not surprising that many of these students exhibit violent behaviour. Consequently, both short-term intervention and long-term prevention strategies are essential, if we are to support our schools as safe havens for learning, places

where mutual respect and responsible citizenship are valued and practised. I believe that *Violence-Free Schools Policy* is the basis for providing schools with that solid support. It is also clear to me, however, that we have more work to do.

To highlight both the solutions and the problem, the Ministry of Education and Training is designating next April as Safe Schools Month. We hope that this month will develop a shared sense of responsibility for dealing with the problems of violence. We hope it will highlight some of the excellent work that is already underway within school boards and within the community.

The Ministry of Education and Training will be taking the lead in focussing public attention on school violence. Here are some of the things that will be happening:

- schools will be asked to host sessions which bring together parents and children to discuss the causes and solutions for school violence
- the Ministry will convene a forum on school violence; this will be an opportunity for discussion of practical approaches to dealing with the problem
- as information video produced by the Ministry and aimed at teachers and students will be available for use during Safe Schools Month
- we will also undertake a media campaign designed to inform young people about the consequences of violent behaviour

I am sure that school boards across the province will want to develop their own list of activities to meet the needs of their local communities. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, school trustees — everyone in the community must be aware of the problem and must take a stand.

For me, the key to making our schools safe lies in shared responsibility through strong school and community partnerships. I am confident that, as school boards work with people in their neighbourhoods to implement *Violence-Free Schools Policy*, schools will become the safe learning environments that they are meant to be.

The Consultation Process

Tony Martin

*MPP for Sault Ste. Marie and
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister
of Education and Training*

Last year, I was fortunate to be asked by Minister of Education and Training, Dave Cooke, to chair the Minister's Work Group on Violence Prevention. This group brought together a wide range of stakeholders to give advice on a Ministry of Education and Training policy which would help school boards address violence in schools. We also suggested procedures to be used by schools in reporting incidents to the police and the ministry. Consultation has been a cornerstone of most initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Training and the violence-free schools initiative was one of our most significant achievements.

The varied Work Group, which included representatives from police, labour, teacher federations, parent, trustee and student organizations, and other ministries and special interest groups, met eight times over a period of five months. At these meetings, we carefully considered what elements should be in the policies, and tried to give direction to the staff who would ultimately write the policy documents. Some of the issues we had to consider were: the differing needs of rural and urban school boards, the legal considerations (in particular the *Young Offenders Act*), the types of violent acts that should be reported to the police and the ministry, and how to record violent incidents on a student's record.

Although we didn't always agree on each issue, there was a general feeling that we had come together to do something important and necessary and that the recommendations we made would go a long way in making schools safe places to learn and work. Recognizing the significance of our task allowed us to ignore any minor ideological differences we might have had.

Developing the draft policy papers would have been a mammoth task at the

best of times, and given the short timelines, we were justifiably proud of our accomplishment. We began meeting in December 1993, and by the end of February 1994, two policy documents were ready for province-wide consultation: *Framework for the Development of Violence Prevention Policies by School Boards and Reporting Violent Incidents to the Police and the Ministry of Education and Training*.

The first consultation was the March 5, 1994, Community Summit at Queen's Park. Some 450 people attended this one-day event and provided us with valuable feedback on the policy papers. Participants also had the opportunity to attend workshops on related subjects, such as "Issues of Equity," "Safe School Models," and "Schools and the Police: Working Together."

During April and May 1994, we took the policy papers across Ontario, so that people from different regions and with different experiences would have a chance to comment on them. At 18 regional summits, we reached another 2500 Ontarians.

The logistics of holding 18 meetings in one month were difficult, but not insurmountable. The six regional offices of the Ministry of Education and Training were heavily involved in the process. Many of the summits involved local groups and organizations. School boards and community organizations made presentations and set up displays showing how they were working to prevent violence.

By the time the local summits were finished, people from Windsor to Kingston to Thunder Bay had had the opportunity to discuss the draft policy documents and give us their opinions. They gave us many good ideas and we considered every single one of them in developing our final policy. A number of changes were made as a result of public input. For example, many people felt that we needed to place a greater emphasis on the problem of racism and its relationship to violence. This was reflected in the final policy, which now lists hate-motivated violence as one of the types of incidents to be reported to the police. We also ensured, based on public comment, that the policy would apply to the whole school community, including all staff and students.

Once our consultations were reflected in the policy documents, they were combined into one document, the *Violence-Free Schools Policy*. Every school board in Ontario has now received a copy.

The Implementation Challenge

Jean Hewitt

*Project Coordinator,
Violence-Free Schools,
Ministry of Education and Training*

In June 1994, the Ministry of Education and Training took a bold step as Ontario became the first province to issue a comprehensive policy aimed both at preventing and handling school violence. The implementation of this policy is an important and challenging task.

On the surface, *Violence-Free Schools Policy* is a comparatively simple and clear set of directives. Boards are required to develop their own violence prevention policies consisting of short-term interven-

tion and long-term prevention strategies. Since its distribution, the requirements that zero-tolerance of violence be demonstrated and that incidents of violence be reported to the police and recorded in the Ontario School Record have received much attention and become, in some cases, the major focus of compliance to the policy.

However, if boards across the province are to follow the *spirit* as well as the *letter* of *Violence-Free Schools Policy*, a great deal of work lies ahead. Schools and community groups must look deeper at the underlying causes of violence. They must critically examine many aspects of school life and must focus on strategies that will decrease the likelihood that stu-

dents will become verbally and physically aggressive or have access to weapons.

Violence-Free Schools Policy has particularly powerful implications for the following areas:

Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity

How will policies in these areas be integrated with violence prevention in schools?

Curriculum Content and Delivery

How will the violence prevention outcomes woven throughout the Common Curriculum be achieved?

Early Identification and Intervention

How can schools identify and support in the early grades children who may be at risk of becoming bullies or victims.

Staff Development

What types of training do teachers and support staff need to provide them with the skills to handle disruptive and aggressive students?

Partnerships

How can schools increase the involvement of parents, community leaders, other agencies, and the police in building violence-free schools?

In short, successful implementation of *Violence-Free Schools Policy* may require some fundamental changes in curriculum delivery, early identification procedures, and the relationships between the school and community partners such as health and welfare agencies, the police, and religious and cultural leaders.

Provincial Action by the Ministry of Education and Training

The Provincial implementation plan for *Violence-Free Schools Policy* during the 1994/95 school year has the following objectives:

- facilitate the effective implementation of the Policy by September 1995
- support local initiatives around *Violence-Free Schools Policy*
- sensitize the community to the need for local policies on school-related violence

- heighten student awareness that violence is not only undesirable but also intolerable

- encourage increased collaboration among all segments of the community on violence prevention initiatives

Implementation at the provincial level will occur in four phases:

Phase 1 (July to October 1994)

- collecting, creating, and organizing relevant information and support material for regional offices and boards
- discussing with regional office staff of the Ministry of Education and Training in regard to the support given to board committees in the development of local policies and recording procedures
- distributing, in conjunction with the Safe School Task Force, a student booklet on creating a secure environment
- establishing, in collaboration with Metropolitan Toronto School Board, a model program for expelled students
- developing communication strategies to inform the larger community
- strengthening of partnerships with other ministries, teacher federations, special interest groups, business and labour leaders, community leaders

Phase 2 (November 1994 to March 1995)

- consolidation of the support given to local boards through the distribution of information, workshops for liaison personnel attached to The Model Program for Expelled Students, and information sessions for teachers
- community outreach initiatives through media — magazines, television, video, radio

Phase 3 (April 1995)

- support for province-wide, school-based *Violence-Free Schools* month
- distribution of additional support materials including a classroom video package on violence prevention for teachers and students

Phase 4 (May to July 1995)

- review of provincial implementation process
- evaluation of the Model Program for Expelled Students
- continued exploration of exemplary practice through regional conferences, workshops, and videos
- review of the criteria of successful local implementation of *Violence-Free schools* initiatives

Local Action

During the time in which more widely focussed provincial actions are being taken to heighten awareness of the depth and scope of the issue of violence prevention, regional office staff of the Ministry of Education and Training will work with board representatives to assist them in the development of local policies and implementation plans.

They will conduct working sessions across the province from October to December 1994. Consultation with students, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders will be a priority. While the framework for local *Violence-Free schools* policies has been set out by the province, boards will write their own policies to reflect the unique characteristics of the communities. Regional office staff will provide support materials and training to help board committees to write new policies or to review existing ones. They will also support local staff development around prevention strategies, early identification, and curriculum implementation.

It is within the interaction between teachers and citizens in diverse communities across the province that the success of *Violence-Free Schools Policy* will be determined. It is here that the policy will either become a vehicle for fundamental change, positively influencing the conduct of potentially violent young people, or merely a paper exercise which could be used as an excuse to "criminalize" young people, as some fear.

As provincial implementation moves forward, the focus will be firmly on prevention, supported by the belief that Ontario schools can and will make a difference in the creation of a society free of verbal and physical abuse.

Some Ontario School Board Initiatives

There is an old dictum that says if it's educationally sound, it should be administratively possible; therefore, if we believe that these things should be happening, then we should be able to address the difficulties that arise.

A Directors' Panel on Safe Schools

Four Directors of Education from the Greater Metro Region came to OISE on November 22, 1994 to discuss safe school policies and issues in their school systems. The discussion was moderated by Safe School Task Force Chair and *Orbit*

Guest Editor Stu Auty. The participants were:

Dr. Anthony Barone, Director of the Metropolitan Separate School Board; Dr. Harold Brathwaite, Director of the Peel Board of Education; Ms. Joan Green, Director of the Toronto Board of Education; and Mr. Bill McIntosh, Director of the Etobicoke Board of Education.

Stu Some of the larger Ontario school boards have been leaders in safe schools policy development for some time now. What will be the impact of the Ministry of Education and Training's Violence-Free School initiative on your board's work in this area?

Harold It has caused people to look at and review the policies and practices that they had in place. But many boards of education, the Peel Board included, have had policies and practices in place for a long time and, more recently, have been working with a variety of community groups and other boards to reinforce them.

Joan The Ministry's policy suggests schools establish safe school committees. In fact, the policies of many of our boards go one step beyond that and mandate that those committees involve community members, students, and staff in proactive ways. That's one of the most exciting parts about the circumstances to which we're responding: there seems to be a consensus and a heartfelt belief on the part of all the players in this piece, whether they be young people or parents or other adults in the community who don't have children. It is one of the few areas where we're not meeting with the traditional responses —

for example, the overburdened teacher who replies with, "Don't give me one more thing to do." I believe that the Ministry's policy was a catalyst to all boards in the province getting outside, but, from my viewpoint, it didn't go as far as some of our boards have already gone.

Stu Would you say there's been a legitimacy added to the issue as a result of the Ministry initiative?

Tony I would say there has. Actually what it has done is to cause us to pull our policies together. We have approximately a dozen policies that now fall under one heading, so that they're very easy for a school to access now. But I think it's a more hands-on approach from the Ministry than we've had — for example, with regard to reporting incidents to the Ministry, which wasn't done before. I believe there's more of an accountability now to the Ministry. I don't feel negative about it at all.

Bill Like most boards, Etobicoke had an excellent policy in place in 1990, but changes have occurred since then, and every year we've taken new initiatives. I think the Ministry has helped us to focus and consider some changes in our policy.

The involvement of the community, I believe, is one of the really significant changes since that time.

Stu You all represent large boards of education. Can you see yourselves developing the kind of partnering process that the Ministry is trying to get going?

Joan One of the things that has already happened is that the boards in Metro have joined together to provide alternatives to suspension and expulsion for young people. That's something that's been a troublesome area for all of us. I'm certain that the program that now is in place will allow us to meet the dual obligation we have, which is to provide a safe and secure environment for all our students, teachers, and staff, and also to not turn our backs on young people who are not able to respond as we want them to. So that is one area where co-operation is in place. The other area where I think it will happen is responding to violence in the media.

I think there's also a role for us to play in taking the next steps together. The next steps can involve things like general guidelines for school safety-and-security-audit committees; how to deal with violence in the media — the questions of children's programming raised by the "Power Rangers." There will be plenty of opportunities for us to coalesce around issues like that, in addition to what to do with young people who behave in ways we find reprehensible.

Stu We all know what a good school is — everybody plays a part, everybody participates. One of the concerns out there now is teachers who are saying, "Just a minute now, things are a bit too risky to supervise." What is your response to teachers who are questioning supervisory roles?

Harold That has not been an issue, to my knowledge, in Peel, because I think that teachers in Peel recognize that both diverse extracurricular and co-curricular activities build a positive school environment. We've got a number of procedures in place to support teachers if there are problems around violence in schools, but most of these address supervision concerns that apply to trespassers. It's not so much our own kids as people who tres-

pass in the schools and who come to various games. The majority of teachers really are strongly supportive of being involved because they have relationships with the students. I don't see teachers as anxious to drop those by any means.

Tony I think it's made us re-look at supervision. It's a matter of saying, "Okay, we're going to have a particular activity, now let's make sure we have enough people." In the elementary schools, we've always done this; we say, "If you're going on a trip, make sure you have so many people to supervise the Junior/Senior Kindergarten children." I think that in the secondary schools we may have to up the ratio a bit. Teachers are happy to supervise activities as long as the numbers are there.

Joan It's one of the areas where in fact parental involvement will be very deeply welcomed by teachers. I think the problem comes when teachers feel they're carrying the can alone. We've just established something in Toronto that's really fresh. On November 17, we held the first meeting of a group of people who were addressing issues of violence in schools, what we call our "Secondary Parent Community Network." These individuals are helping secondary teachers so that they're not solely responsible for supervising events without the help of other caring adults. The notion is that it takes a whole community to support children's education and development. When teachers feel that they have that sort of support, they have a different perspective and don't feel isolated. Another factor is the police. When the relationships that are established with the police are conducive to co-operation, to ongoing consistent response, and to being able to talk with each other, then you've got a better network, a different scaffolding for teachers than you would have if they are out there on their own.

Stu So you're saying when staff see administrative and community support, this engenders further participation and builds a sense of confidence so that they'll not only continue to be there after school but perhaps even increase their activities.

Bill I want to pick up on a couple of things. One, if there is a concern, we have

to find out what it is, and then address it. It may be as simple as looking at a school where there are 15 telephones but they're all locked up after 6:00 p.m. and unavailable if there is an emergency. There are some very simple things that we can do. Second, I want to comment on the Safe School Task Force's survey that was done last year. Fourteen-hundred employees across the province came back when asked, "What makes you feel safe in your school?," with "a good school atmosphere." Next on the list were support from colleagues and administrative staff and the presence of the police in the school community. As long as we continue to foster good school atmosphere and support our employees, we will continue to have safe schools. The presence of the police is also important.

Stu The reasons for a good school haven't changed much over the years. The same basic premises are there, and will continue to be but they have to be reinforced. Is this the main idea here?

Tony I believe many of us have always been very supportive of what we call good school spirit. But there are those who feel that what they do in the classroom is where it starts and ends, and of course being a good classroom teacher is really important. But I think for the first time we have documented evidence that the employee groups — that's including secretaries, caretakers, teachers, principals, and vice-principals — are saying that school spirit, school atmosphere, is important to their safety and well-being.

Stu There's a lot of concern about "event violence," sport events or dances or whatever, and about intruders who come onto school property. Some people are questioning whether we should still hold events because of this. Any comments?

Joan Not to evade your question, but to respond to a circumstance that we just experienced, which you've all shared with us in terms of sympathy and support. Two of our teachers were shot at one of our high schools. We found that the young people and the teachers in question drew a lot of their strength from the already-established groups in the school; it was clear that they had links to each other. The kids told me that what they were most

worried about was — after the teachers' well-being, which was on everyone's mind — whether the school was going to get a bad name as a result of this and what could we do together to work with the media to tell all of the good things the school did, from their co-curricular teams and activities to their academic achievements.

Harold Thomas Sergiovanni says the best discipline strategies are those that teach students citizenship and help them become caring adults. He goes on to talk about democratic communities, about developing norms. That sort of thing only happens when you create a set of circumstances for kids and teachers and parents to come together in the schools around a variety of events and things of interest. I believe that these are absolutely vital to maintain school spirit and to set norms and expectations about behaviour.

Stu Bill, you and I attended the Ontario Coaches' Symposium in June, and at that time there was discussion about banning spectators from sporting events in Ontario because of concerns about school violence, and that's really where this question is coming from.

Bill I'm a very strong supporter of school activities and sports of all kinds. But there is no one sport or no one activity that a school or a system rises and falls on. So if there is an activity that is causing great concern, and could be a physical threat to people, then I'm supportive of taking action on that, whether it means taking the spectators away for a while or turning from that sport to another sport. I don't think it means moving away from school spirit and activities, but I think sometimes we have to be ready to step in and take action and that's what some coaches have done.

Harold There is an old dictum that says if it's educationally sound, it should be administratively possible; therefore, if we believe that these things should be happening, then we should be able to address the difficulties that arise.

Stu So you're talking about an administrative will to make this go.

Joan And to listen to the people who



“There is an African proverb that says it takes a whole community to support children's education and development. Schools can't do it all alone.”

— Joan Green

are involved to see what they know, I think one of the dilemmas is that we say, “This is the path of a truly effective school” without hearing from the folks on the front line who are delivering it and without examining it in genuine ways to make it possible.

Tony When we have activities, we need clearly defined expectations. In the past, we've had activities because they were good, fun to have, and we really didn't think of the expectations — it was just the normal thing to do. But to not have an activity is really punishing everybody in the school for a very small number of people, and I don't think that's right.

Stu Judgments have to be made regarding the majority in the school setting. How do you view individual versus collective rights; where do you draw the line?

Bill I really believe that the schools are for all learners and that we have to ensure that when those students enter our doors in the morning, they know and their parents know that they're in a safe place. If that means, from time to time, drawing a line and saying to an individual, “You cannot be here because that will not allow us to maintain a safe school for others,” then I'm certainly prepared to do that. A number of boards, including Etobicoke, have set up programs to assist the students who've been suspended and, hopefully, to change their behaviour so that when they come back into the school setting, they can operate in a way that's acceptable.

Tony I don't think we can tolerate violence. We have to cope with it using

everything in our means including the *Education Act*. There are individual rights, but I think the collective safety of the other students in the system overrides them.

Harold I don't think you will find any one of us here who will question whether the collective safety of students and staff is not of prime importance. But the question is, what do you do with young people who are violent or cannot be allowed to stay in school? Do you just abandon them? Do you just expel them? We have a very formal process for expelling as well as for re-admitting, for counselling, for monitoring the behaviour of these young people. Two out of every five students who get expelled are re-admitted. It's important, that as administrators or principals, we take a personal responsibility for trying to rehabilitate these students, otherwise we are going to have young people who are going to become problems for society later on. We can't simply abandon our obligation. You may not be able to educate them in the school environment, but I think we have to find a way to educate them otherwise.

Joan I think we probably all agree with the principle of mandatory response, whether we believe in calling it zero tolerance or not. I think all incidents of violence must be confronted firmly and directly, and with reference to a standard protocol that everyone understands. That's the key. If everyone working in the school system has a common understanding of what the standard protocol is in response to certain kinds of behaviours, with appropriate consequences, then you have a far less jeopardized situation. I think that

Harold touched on the question of what you do for students who are behaving in ways we can't accept. We have looked, in Metro, at a program for students who have been expelled from schools. That means you do what Bill says. You remove them from the environment where their interactions have proved to be very deleterious, and you put them in a situation where a clear set of guidelines operate. They have some opportunity to continue.

What do you do with a 13-year old who has done something which is deemed by the protocols of the board to be completely inappropriate? Let's get realistic about what expulsion means. It simply means that if Tony expels someone, or Bill does, the problem may be on my doorstep, or if I expel someone, the problem will be on their doorstep. So I think we need to have a holistic attitude about what it is we need to put in place not only to provide for those young people, but also to ensure we don't compound the problems.

Stu Some of the research that has been done in the United States shows that school administrators spend an inordinate amount of time on safe-school issues. Do you see day-to-day pressures on your administrators regarding school violence that are different from what they faced in the past?

Tony I believe there's a fantastic increase in pressure on the principals, vice-principals, and guidance individuals in the schools, and a great deal of time is spent on a few students. This has become the "business of the school," and I think that people have to realize that this is part of the job. Dealing with violence in the schools is their work and unfortunately it detracts from other things that they might like to do.

Harold I see this as a very important part of our work, because when we talk about violence in society, how are we going to change that if we don't change it in our young people? So looking at proactive curriculum, at mentorship, at values and attitudes, at a human-rights curriculum is critical to changing behaviours and making the school a community for young people and for parents. I think that is time well spent if we are going to change the nature of our society.

Joan I think one of the ways we can offer some relief to people who are feeling the pressure comes from sharing the information and responses. Very often people do wonderful things in individual settings to respond to a pressure. Because of the way we all run crazily from one issue to another and one responsibility to another, sometimes there aren't appropriate mechanisms put into place to ensure that the victories of one setting or one school are shared with another school. One of the things I'd like to try and do in our system is try to put together in a very reflective way a set of guidelines or resources around issues that individual valiant staff have dealt with. One of the best things that can happen as a result of Brockton is to

area of prevention and really changing the lifestyle and the future of a lot of young people. So although they would sooner be doing something else, I think it's maybe the most important thing they can do.

Stu How do you feel about a consistent policy on safe schools that would emanate from J.K. to OAC, understood by the parents. Comments on that?

Tony Actually most of our policies that we gathered together are pretty well applicable to both elementary and secondary schools. We don't have policies for elementary and policies for secondary. We get into other issues when we're dealing with young offenders or with people over



“When we talk about violence in society, how are we going to change that if we don't change it in our young people?”

— Harold Brathwaite

have the staff there who responded so admirably share their experience with other staffs. One of the worst losses of human energy is when superb response and excellent proactive planning is isolated and doesn't get wide understanding.

Harold This is not a just an issue for administration; this is a whole-staff effort. They're the ones who will make the difference.

Tony Twenty years ago school administrators were saying, "I don't have enough time to work on program; I wish I could get into classrooms." So today administrators and schools are concerned because they are spending too much time in the area of violence. But those excellent administrators are out in the halls, in the parking lots; they're dealing with the students and when they're doing that, they're dealing with behaviours, with values. I think they're doing an incredible job in the

18 years of age; the law tells you what you can do and what you can't do. But outside of those external forces, external laws, where the *Education Act* may differ, we really have the same expectations with regard to issues such as violence.

Harold I can't imagine a different set of norms for elementary schools and secondary schools. I think that a consistent protocol of expectations would be what we would all expect.

Joan Something we haven't talked about today which is of increasing interest to me is what are we going to do in the next couple of years when we see an increasing enrolment in our J.K. programs of — to use the popular phrase which I find abhorrent — "crack babies." If we look at the research that's been done, it's absolutely certain that we will receive into our schools far more children who are emotionally dysfunctional and who have

psychologically based challenges to controlling their behaviours. They are already there, but I think the numbers are going to increase in ways that will be a matter of concern. All of that takes me to the observation that we need to look at social policy solutions that don't deal only with education. We need to think on a broader base about how we link our work to the work that's being done elsewhere. I think the most important thing that could come out of the Royal Commission — and we

have to address in some holistic fashion. We can't just leave those issues until they come to school.

Joan The Premier's Council on Health, Social Justice and Well Being attempts to address that issue in the document they released some months ago. We have to have a close examination of how we're expending our collective dollars, federally, provincially, and municipally. What are our belief systems about how children pre-

board was really praised for the wonderful work it's doing in technology. That school board also cut out all its music programs. It was a big shock when the members of the Royal Commission heard that. Let's face it, we're not going to do more with less; we will do less with less.

Joan If you look at the situation in the City of Toronto, there is a tremendous need for dealing with young people who are refugees, who have themselves experienced torture or witnessed their parents being tortured. We have 8000 refugees in our school board, and somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2000 of them have witnessed that kind of trauma. Now you can set all the priorities you want, but you can't avoid dealing with those kids. So would someone say that we should cut the one psychiatrist we have on retainer in the board who deals almost exclusively with those children?

Harold And what about the issue of poverty and children who come to school hungry? I mean, yes, we were not set up to feed kids but are you going to ignore the fact that kids are hungry? These are issues that we don't have a choice about addressing.

Tony The last reading tests that came out found that of all the Grade 9 students tested across the province, 14 percent of the students came from homes where English is not the major language, yet when you look at our Board of the students that participated, 44 percent came from homes where English was not the first language. This doesn't have anything to do with violence but it does have to do with the fact that students are different in different jurisdictions. Each of the boards is going to have to address the issues with funds available and determine what's not going to be done, what the trade-offs are.

Stu Half a dozen years ago, there wasn't an official recognition of violence in schools. Now there's an official recognition. There are those that feel a process has been created, is now underway. How do you feel about the fact that the community as a whole is recognizing this as an issue to be dealt with?

Tony The first step in the solution of the problem is the recognition of the prob-



“When students have a bad family life, or have problems on the street, hopefully school is a place where they are treated a little better, feel a little more protected, feel safe.”

— Anthony Barone

will keep our fingers crossed — is a focus on very young children and on what we need to do at the starting point. The fact is that we don't have a particularly “child friendly” society and often that concept isn't on the mind or in the hearts of those people who are setting official policy.

Stu These are new issues, and there aren't going to be more dollars. How do we act smarter as administrators in dealing with new issues when we don't have the kinds of financial resources that we've had in the past?

Bill The whole business of fiscal restraint is something that we sometimes hide behind and I don't think that's the issue, quite frankly. We're well served in this province and country as far as education dollars go, so it's a question of making some tough decisions and putting the money where we really think it should be.

Harold It comes to Joan's concern with social-policy issues. The question of educating young people and dealing with readiness before they come to school are key issues that society will

sent themselves in schools? If we think about our response when we're most panicked and most overrun with things, we tend to need to find a scapegoat, an alleged perpetrator, whom we can deal with. I find this notion of just being tough enough so frustrating, telling people, “Get out of our schools and that's going to fix everything.” We have to deal with troubled kids in one context or another. We need to look for example at what our view is about young women who are in positions of caring for children with no support.

Stu We see massive budget cuts looming on the horizon. What will happen in the larger society if the social programs aren't there? How will that effect the school system?

Tony I think school budgets may diminish even more if the transfer payments are down from the federal government. But whatever happens, boards have to set priorities and if it's dealing with crack babies, we'll deal with that. The big surprise is that there will be other issues that we will not deal with. To give a specific example, at one of the presentations to the Royal Commission, one school



“If there is a concern, we have to find out what it is, and then address it. It may be as simple as looking at a school where there are 15 telephones but they’re all locked up after 6:00 p.m. and unavailable if there is an emergency.”

— Bill McIntosh

lem, and I believe that we’re recognizing it. I believe we’re trying to address it as best we can considering the resources that we have.

Bill We have recognized that it’s a concern, but I think there’s still a tendency to believe this is only a school problem. In fact, violence is a societal problem. However, those of us in education have a responsibility to work with students, parents, and communities to find solutions.

Joan The message is very clear that violence is everybody’s problem and that no one school board, no one social agency, no one police force can go it alone. It’s also very true that school boards need support from all other levels of government, from other agencies, and other organizations to enact legislation that helps reduce the possibility of violence in our schools, whether it’s gun control or supportive social policy that acknowledges the broad scope of intervention required to make this an equitable society for everyone.

Harold There’s a comment about people feeling alienated from family, from friends, from school, from community, from their workplace, and it is absolutely critical that we develop a sense of community in our schools and beyond the schools. I think that has to happen in a sense of personal responsibility on the part of adults for young people, not just teachers but all adults. I think that is happening. I have seen some very positive things in terms of the learning partnerships, in terms of businesses, providing opportunities for young people to have

meaningful experiences in the workplace. I think our society as a whole is starting to come to grips with the fact that we have to deal with this as a total community.

Stu Any final comments on how you see this issue either in its current context or its future context?

Harold I put it to you that parents believe they send the best kids to schools. I would put it to you that at least 95 percent of the kids in our schools are good students. They don’t come to school meaning to try to create problems. They come to school to learn; they come to school to socialize. They come to school because they want to be there. I think we have to build on that and we have to give them a sense that they can influence their own future, that they can democratically participate in the school. I am very positive about our schools.

Tony I’d like to up that. If you look at the number of students who are expelled or suspended, you’re talking about less than one percent. I think some of the expectations people have of institutions, particularly public institutions, are somewhat unreal. I’m talking about the police, the church, hospitals, education. Schools should be leading society but to a certain extent, schools also mirror society. If you have some violence in the home, some violence on the streets, there will be some violence in the schools. Hopefully though, schools should be a little bit of an oasis. When students have a bad family life, have problems on the street, hopefully the school is a place where they’re treated a little better, feel a little more protected,

feel safe. If we can’t do it in our schools where can we do it? We have to get our expectations in order and not expect the impossible and we all have to work.

Bill I believe we’re very fortunate because we live in a country that’s been extremely safe, a city that’s been safe, and we’ve had safe schools. We have to work very hard in an open fashion with all the players to ensure that we maintain those things. I believe we have the resources and the will to do it. I have great confidence in the young people we have. I’m in schools all the time and the young people we’ve been talking about today are not the young people that I see when I go into our schools. But we all have to work hard to maintain schools that are safe.

Joan I think we find our sustenance when we visit our schools; we find reasons to keep on going in the tough bureaucratic and administrative days. I’m enormously proud of the students in our system, and I think they intervene in ways that sometimes the adults in the world can’t imagine to make things better. The answer for me is in the movement towards the ideal. Now that movement itself is not going to be always successful. We won’t always achieve all the objectives we’ve laid out for ourselves. But the movement towards the ideal in itself is renewing and reaffirming and it takes us in the right direction. Our inner-city kids who have overcome the most serious obstacles to success were captured in some very significant research by the Toronto Board a few years ago. They said a couple of things about what made school the haven it’s been for them and about when it wasn’t working. They said they had to have in their lives a sense that the adults in their world — their families, and the caretaker who met them in the halls, the secretary who greeted them, the teacher who met them in the classroom, and the principal who supported those teachers — cared about their academic accomplishments, watched them with interest. Second, they had to have a very strong sense that there was one adult in their world who was consistently there, who could always be counted upon. We’d better be doing that together or our kids are in big trouble.

Stu Thank you all very much for participating in this *Orbit* panel.

Safety and Security in Schools and Workplaces

The Toronto Board of Education's Violence Prevention Programs

Rick Kollins

*School Superintendent,
Toronto Board of Education*

The Toronto Board of Education's Safety and Security Policy, which took effect in September 1994, attempts to balance long-term prevention with immediate intervention. Believed to be the first Safe Schools Policy in Ontario to include all the requirements of the provincial government's Violence-Free Schools Policy, the Toronto Board policy was developed following extensive consultation within the Toronto educational system and the community at large.

The project was co-ordinated by a reference group under the leadership of the Chair of the Toronto Board of Education David Moll and myself. The Safety and Security Reference Group included trustees, staff, students, parents and representatives from community organizations, teachers' federations, Board unions, the City of Toronto Safe City Committee, and the Metropolitan Toronto Police.

Although the Toronto Board policy sets out specific procedures and guidelines for responding to violent incidents, the major focus of the policy is violence prevention. In accordance with the new provincial policy, violence prevention is to be incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum from kindergarten to the end of secondary school.

All schools are required to develop Codes of Behaviour for students, staff, and visitors and to establish Safe School Committees and School Safety Plans. Codes of Behaviour and School Safety Plans are to be developed through the collaboration of school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, students and representatives of the community.

A significant feature of the Safety and

Security Policy is the establishment of a full range of support programs, from kindergarten through secondary school, for students who experience behavioural difficulties or who require temporary withdrawal from regular programs as a result of long-term suspension or exclusion. These programs include:

- Early Intervention Program for kindergarten students who enter the school system with serious emotional or behavioural problems
- Intensive Behavioural Program for elementary school students who require a treatment component in their educational setting
- Community Attendance Program for early adolescents who are unable to function successfully in regular classrooms
- Alternative Curriculum for Excluded and Suspended Students (ACE) for secondary school students who receive lengthy suspensions or have been excluded from regular programs for safety reasons

For responding to incidents or situations involving violence or potential violence, the Board approved the *Principle of Mandatory Response to Violence in Schools*, under which staff will be obliged to respond without delay when the safety and security of students, staff, and the school community are violated or threatened.

The procedures and guidelines outlined for school administrators describe serious incidents which must be reported to the police and recommend minimum suspensions for initial and repeat infractions. The guidelines also encourage the use of alternatives to suspension for less serious incidents and for students under the age of 12.

Other highlights of the policy are:

- the establishment of a work group to study the issue of violence in the print and electronic media and to make recommendations for the inclusion of media literacy into the curriculum guidelines being developed by the Board
- the provision of in-service training in conflict management and crisis intervention for school administrators, teachers, and support staff
- a detailed review of the Board's surveillance and telephone/electronic communications system and a pilot project involving two-way radios in schools
- exploration of the issue of photo identification for staff in schools and workplaces
- an agreement between the Toronto Board, Centennial College, and the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board to establish a Child and Youth Worker Apprenticeship Program for educational assistants
- a review of the Board's Tragic Events Response Program to provide support and advocacy for victims and perpetrators of violence and for school communities affected by violence
- discussions between the Toronto Board and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board to address the funding of safety and security initiatives in conjunction with the other school boards in Metro Toronto
- development of revised guidelines for racial and ethnocultural mistreatment of students, staff, and visitors to schools and workplaces
- development of procedures for implementing Ministry of Education and Training requirements for reporting violent incidents to parents/guardians, the police and the Ministry, and for recording incidents of violence in a student's Ontario School Record

The Safe Sport Environment Protocol

The Toronto Board of Education's new Safety and Security Policy also includes a protocol for promoting a safe and positive environment at school athletic events. *The Safe Sport Environment Protocol* sets out the responsibilities of school administra-

tors for ensuring that athletic events are conducted in a safe and positive manner and includes expectations for coaches, staff supervisors, student athletes, and spectators.

Differing levels of supervision are required for the various types of events and situations, such as traditional rivalries between schools which have the potential for inappropriate or unsafe spectator behaviour. The protocol also includes the possibility of conducting competitions without spectators or cancelling events

completely if a safe environment cannot be ensured.

Copies of the *Toronto Board of Education Policy for Safety and Security in Schools and Workplaces* are available from the Public Information Office, Toronto Board of Education, 155 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1P6, Telephone (416) 397-3220. For more information or copies of the *Toronto Board of Education Safe Sport Environment Protocol*, contact Al Quance, Co-ordinator of Physical and Health Education, Toronto Board of Education, Telephone (416) 397-3780.

Guidelines were provided indicating where conflict resolution skills were already being addressed in the existing curriculum in order to reinforce the idea that teachers were not being asked to initiate a totally new program. A training manual is presently being compiled for schools who have peer mediation programs in place but are in need of further training exercises.

Workshops have been offered to parents on understanding conflict, communication, and anger management. In addition, the Safe School Coordinating Committee has invited staff, students, and parents to provide input on their attitudes towards violence in schools and how this problem should be addressed, particularly when there is a violation of Board policy. To date over 600 opinions have been collected.

In the Fall of 1992, the Metropolitan Separate School Board and the Safe School Task Force invited students to become involved in a project to reduce violence, racism, and harassment in their schools. Schools (either total schools or groups within schools) were asked to identify, choose, plan, and implement a safety issue that was of importance to them. Every school was offered a participation award with special recognition given to the most effective project in terms of its ability to impact on the school and community. Projects included videos, posters, essays, safety audits, drama productions, and other aids designed to heighten awareness and produce a positive attitude towards safety in schools.

The Safe School Task Force, representing 38 organizations including the Metropolitan Separate School Board, also sponsored a Youth Leadership Challenge Project aimed at students at risk of dropping out of school. (See this issue of *Orbit* for a description of the program.) During its first year the Metropolitan Separate School Board had 70 students from 13 schools participating in the project.

The Safe Schools Coordinating Committee recommended the introduction of conflict mediation programs to provide students with the opportunity to learn interpersonal problem solving skills. In 1990 one elementary and two secondary schools had such a program. Today, over one-half of the schools in the Metropolitan Separate School Board have conflict

The Journey Towards Peace

Conflict Mediation Programs at the Metropolitan Separate School Board

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for its resolution. Forty-two recommendations were developed, 10 representing short-term consequences for violent behaviour, and 32 representing long-term preventative approaches. The short-term suggestions dealt with responses to assaultive behaviour, possession of weapons, behaviour at extracurricular activities and suspensions. Long-term proposals focussed on the school system, staff, parent, and student community.

The school board determined that conflict management training should be approached on a system-wide basis. Consequently, in-service training on effective techniques for resolving conflict has been offered to all school board personnel. Sessions have been designed specifically for the particular groups and follow-up training is provided to assist in a further refinement of the skills. In addition, a handbook is being developed to provide an overview of the pertinent legislation, board policy, and some suggestions for dealing with violent situations, resolving conflict, and building a positive school climate.

A Safe Schools Action Team, in cooperation with the Board's professional library, developed a resource package which included a bibliography and materials for both elementary and secondary schools interested in conflict resolution.

Ensuring school safety has been a concern of all Boards since their inception. For example, policies affecting intruders, fire regulations, and vandalism have been in place for some time. However, with the increase of violence in schools an even greater emphasis has been directed towards the need to develop policies and procedures that will enhance the safety of our school communities. The following outlines efforts made by the Metropolitan Separate School Board to create a secure, comfortable environment for its staff and students.

In the Fall of 1990, a Safe Schools Coordinating Committee was formed to investigate the problem of school violence and to provide recommendations

management programs, many with a peer mediation component. At the elementary level, a number of schools have adopted the Peacemakers program as a basis for training students in conflict resolution. Some of these schools also offer a peer managers program where a small cadre of trained students assist other students who are in disagreement to come to a mutually acceptable resolution of their difficulties. The goals and operation of the conflict mediation programs are generally similar at the elementary and secondary levels although the secondary program is more formalized.

Conflict Mediation Programs

The secondary school peer mediators program opened in the Fall of 1990 in two single-sex (one male, one female) schools. It began by acquiring the consent of the Superintendent of the Schools, now chairperson of the Safe Schools Coordinating Committee for the Board. In consultation with the school administration, support was confirmed for the program and outside trainers were invited to speak to the staffs about peer mediation programs. An advisor from the Psychology Department was appointed to coordinate the programs for the two secondary schools. Both schools agreed to try the program and interested staff were asked to participate in dispute resolution training. This was offered on a weekend and about one-third of the staffs from each school agreed to become involved. This was a sufficient number to initiate the program and sustain it for the past four years.

From the personnel who participated in the training, approximately ten teachers from each school indicated an interest in becoming part of a steering committee that assisted in planning, promoting, and operating the program. Two teachers from each school were appointed to assume the responsibility of coordinating the program. At the elementary level generally only one coordinator is required.

Approximately 20 students were selected from each school to be trained as mediators. They were chosen to represent the school population in age, grade, race, ethnic background, interests, and academic proficiency. Self, peer, and teacher choice were the criteria used for

student selection, although it was found that self-selection was the best predictor of commitment. If the student was not interested in spite of high peer approval, she or he rarely attended the follow-up training sessions. One school interviewed the students to ascertain their commitment in terms of availability for training during the year, willingness to make up for missed school work, and agreement to mediate when asked. While some schools selected and trained one group of students from the entire student body for the mediator role, others selected them from an already established group such as the Peer Tutor or Peer Ministers program.

For the sake of efficiency and to encourage student participation and promote dialogue, the schools were asked to pair up for the initial training. The initial training took place over one and a half days and was accomplished with an early dismissal one day and a professional activity day the next. Presently with the reduction in professional activity days in the past two years, schools are either spreading the early training over a few

Each school is unique and it is important that programs be designed to suit the particular needs of the school.

weeks or are requesting assistance from Student Services personnel to replace teachers who would otherwise train but then lose class time.

Training is generally done at the school and is held in a room large enough for the students to move around freely. Topics covered during the initial training include understanding conflict, basic communication, and an introduction to mediation. Follow-up training is held either every week or bi-weekly and is conducted by the coordinator and advisory staff. Guest speakers, generally from other fields such as law, community services, or other government agencies are

invited during the year to discuss the application of dispute resolution to their particular fields.

Mediation sessions are usually held during school hours and within 24 to 48 hours of the incident. Sessions generally last about an hour and are conducted by two mediators. If the dispute is not resolved within the time frame initially agreed upon, the disputants are invited to return the next day. Some schools designate a certain time of the day for mediation to be held while others are more spontaneous in their timing. Every effort is made to accommodate the regular program and to avoid withdrawing mediators from their classes. Generally, schools hold about 20 mediations a year that commonly deal with rumours, gossip, property damage, and verbal harassment. Each school determines what is considered appropriate for mediation.

In one school, in order to interest students in the mediation program, a few senior students agreed to assist the teachers in presenting a mock conflict in each classroom and to answer questions about the program. Students seem most intrigued when the simulated conflict is between teachers. In another school, some students wore sweat shirts with "Don't Fight" on one side and "Set It Right" on the other and invited students to come to an assembly to have the logos explained. Again, each school determines what will appeal to their student body and a promotion committee works throughout the year to inform and maintain student interest in the program.

Evaluating the effectiveness of mediation programs in our schools has raised several issues which deserve comment. Each school is unique and it is important that programs be designed to suit the particular needs of the school. Advisory committees can play a role in helping to identify and implement programs that best reflect the school's character. The fact that conflict mediation programs may function in diverse ways points to the significance of networking. When staffs from different schools are given the opportunity to share ideas with one another everyone seems to benefit from the information and renewed energy that the experience brings. To sustain interest and enhance skills, the role of the mediator can be expanded.

For example, in the past four years

our mediators have made presentations on dispute resolution to staffs, students, and parents, participated in a victim offender community project, and have written articles on conflict management for the school newspaper. They have produced a play for elementary schools, have trained new inductees either in their

own school or other schools, and have assisted classroom teachers with demonstrations and discussions on a variety of topics related to communication, negotiation, bullying, self-esteem, and anger management. Finally, peer mediation programs seem to function best when there is strong support from a variety of

sources, including parents, administration, staff, and students. Within the schools, if discipline, curriculum, and teaching style are working to create a positive climate, peer mediation programs, rather than struggling independently, become a natural extension of the school's journey toward peace.

We Can Do Something

Planning for Change at the Peel Board of Education

Dr. Steve Barker

Senior Psychologist

Garry Campbell

Behavior Consultant

Dave Leeder

*Superintendent of School Services,
Peel Board of Education,
Mississauga, Ontario*

If we are to deal effectively with behavioural problems in our schools, it is necessary to have programs which intervene at a variety of levels. The foundation of any program is a board-wide policy to address discipline and the safety of students and staff. The discipline policy should contain clear goals for student behaviour with common expectations for students in all schools. The goal of respect for the rights of others, for example, would be reflected in student interactions in which harassment and physical confrontation are not present or accepted. The policy must be responsive to changes within both schools and society in general.

At the school level, the discipline policy forms the basis for the development of a code of behaviour. The involvement of students, staff, and community is

essential to ensure the ownership of all parties. The rights of students and their responsibilities must be clearly reflected. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour should be varied and clearly articulated. From the stable base of knowing what is expected, it is far easier to establish a school tone conducive to a positive learning environment. This atmosphere is enhanced when students are part of its development and maintenance. Their meaningful involvement in school life will lead to feelings of ownership and commitment to their school.

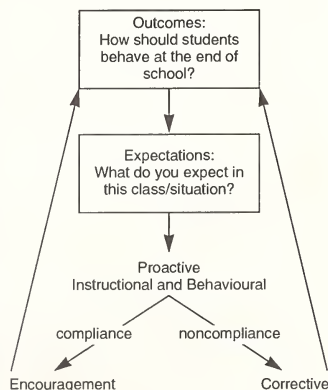
The final level is the classroom, where comprehensive management practices are put in place by all teachers. It is essential that they have the necessary skills to work with all students and especially those exhibiting behavioural problems. Staff-training programs need to be developed in response to this need.

Putting school-wide and classroom-based models into place requires considerable thought and planning. Figure 1 shows the steps which can guide the process. Teaching staffs, in conjunction with parents, decide on outcomes for students — how do we want students to be when they graduate? Specific expectations are then developed for academic and non-academic behaviour. These expectations are developed in order to address any potential problems and to encourage the desired outcomes.

These proactive expectations and actions should reflect good instructional and management practices that maximize engaged learning and prevent problems. Finally, strategies to encourage appropriate behaviour and correct undesirable behaviour need to be developed.

When thinking of student behaviour, it is important to use learning models as a framework. In the world of academics, parents and teachers alike teach the skills needed to perform certain tasks. In the same way, parents and teachers need to recognize that life skills (e.g., how to communicate effectively, how to feel good about oneself, how to deal with feelings, how to deal with conflict, etc.) also have to be taught to our children. We need to think of how we are teaching — or if we are teaching — our children

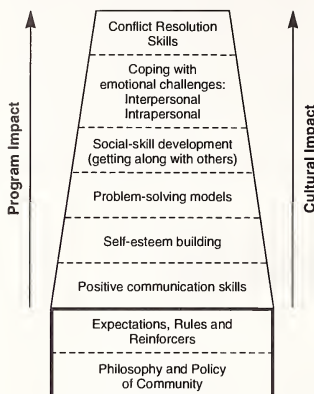
Figure 1 Expectations Model



life skills, both implicitly and explicitly. In teaching these skills, understanding and utilizing a developmental approach is necessary. For example, teaching children to recognize letters and sounds of letters generally facilitates more sophisticated reading and spelling skills. Similarly, teaching students how to listen and how to communicate in pro-social ways generally facilitates their ability to get along with others, to problem-solve, and to resolve conflicts.

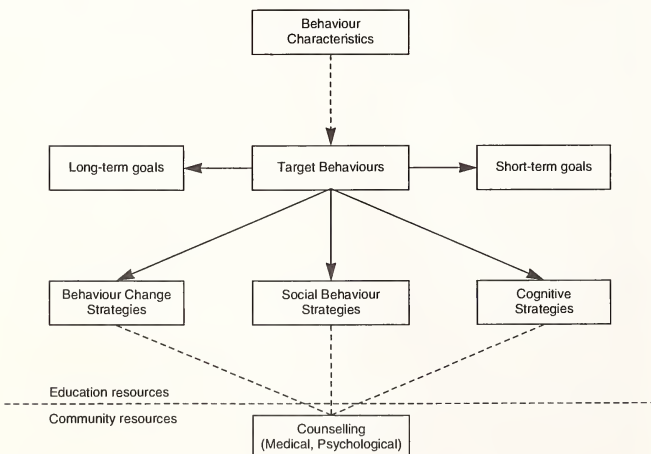
Within the context of the school system, expectations, rules, and the encouragement of appropriate behaviours should reflect the philosophy and policies of the community. Once the basis of knowing what is expected is established, it is far easier to teach the necessary skills outlined in Figure 2. Mastery of the fundamental skills in the hierarchy predisposes one to succeed in mastering higher-level skills. Fine tuning of the skills through ongoing teaching is necessary as the student matures. These skills are often implicit in current programs and curriculum; however, explicit programming is also necessary in many situations. In addition, the impact of the cultural context must be acknowledged.

Figure 2 Necessary Skills Model



Despite positive school/class initiatives that teach and reinforce life skills, some students continue to demonstrate inappropriate behaviours. The Behavioural Change Model (Figure 3) starts

Figure 3 Behaviour Change Model



with a description of the behaviours as they are present in the environment (behavioural characteristics). Describing the behaviours you want the student to engage in (target behaviours) is necessary to establish long-term and short-term goals.

These target behaviours lead to the development of strategies on several dimensions (behavioural, social, cognitive). Behaviour-change strategies focus primarily on describing which behaviours will be reinforced and how and when they will be reinforced. Consequences for specific behaviours are clearly delineated and consistently applied. Encouragement and external monitoring are primary focal points of this dimension.

The target behaviours should lead also to highlighting specific social behaviours that could be taught to the student both through an individual approach as well as through group interaction. The specific steps of each unique skill would be broken down to allow the student to practise the skill that is modelled. Feedback on the student's practice is necessary, and helping the student anticipate where the skill could be used will augment its generalization.

Cognitive strategies for addressing the target behaviours also need to be developed to assist the student in developing problem solving strategies, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement skills. Teaching the student to think about thinking will facilitate the behaviour change process.

Some students may require more intensive interventions through counselling within a medical or psychological framework. Even when such intervention is necessary or is ongoing, the multi-level approach of behaviour change strategies, social behaviour strategies, and cognitive strategies provides the most comprehensive and efficacious program.

The development of this comprehensive behaviour plan requires the co-operation and effort of all partners, within both the system and the community. Partnerships with agencies providing support for students are essential and must be established at both the system and school levels. The need for community resources must be a high priority for all.

We can do something about behaviour but only through careful planning with the provision of resources at all levels.

Keeping Our Schools Safe

The Scarborough Board of Education's Zero Tolerance Approach

Robert W. Heath

*Superintendent of Student and Community Services,
Scarborough Board of Education*

During the past decade, school administrators have seen a dramatic and significant change in the behaviour of the students in their care. With violence on the increase in society, it is not surprising that school officials report the following trends in student behaviour:

- more frequent occurrence of assaultive behaviour
- more violent types of assaultive behaviour
- more weapons, including knives, martial arts weapons, and firearms
- more multi-person incidents (gang activity)
- greater involvement of females in violent behaviour
- more elementary students involved in violence

Most will agree that schools don't inherently cause violent behaviour. It is more likely that the propensity towards violence that we are seeing in society manifests itself in our schools in much the same way as do other societal trends.

There is no question that the current climate of violence in our society presents tremendous challenges to school officials in keeping schools safe. Foremost among these are:

- the fact that our youth have greater access to weapons
- the lack of appropriate placement options for more violent youth
- the workload that volume of incidents places on school administrators
- the perception among youth that the *Young Offenders Act* is permissive

- the frequent lack of parental support for school discipline
- the teacher supervision issue — can and will teachers continue to supervise this type of violent behaviour?
- the code of silence among the rest of the student body, often motivated by a real fear of reprisal

In the midst of this somewhat bleak scenario, the question is "What can a school board do to ensure that its schools provide a safe and secure environment for learning?" The Scarborough Board of Education has attempted to address the challenge in four ways:

- *Zero Tolerance Policy* for violence and weapons
- improved school security
- improved school response to violent incidents
- violence prevention through the curriculum

The foundation of the "zero tolerance" approach involves stating exactly what constitutes unacceptable behaviour in the areas of violence and weapons and indicating very clearly what the consequences will be for those who transgress. The success of such an approach, as a *deterrent to violent behaviour*, lies in the absolute certainty that certain behaviours will have consequences, in the form of removal of privilege, suspension, and possibly expulsion. The Board's suspension policy has been revamped to ensure that suspensions imposed by principals and vice-principals in the Board's 167 schools are consistent and fair, from school to school. The length of any suspension will take into account the seriousness of the incident, the degree of involvement of each individual, and the record of behaviour of each student.

The zero tolerance approach can only be effective in conjunction with a broad spectrum of preventive and supportive

strategies. Suspensions for violent behaviour should always be accompanied by an effort on the part of the school personnel to engage the offending student in counselling for rehabilitation. The Scarborough Board has established an alternative program for students suspended for violent behaviour, where the student attends for the last 18 days of a 20-day suspension and spends half the day in academic maintenance and the other half in behaviour-modification activities. In cases where the offending student's return to school following a suspension would create a stressful situation for the victim, the offender is transferred to another school, through the Fresh Start transfer process; there is full disclosure to the receiving school regarding the reason for the transfer.

The media focus on the Scarborough Board's *Zero Tolerance Policy* has been due to its inclusion of recommendations for expulsion. The *Education Act* has long had a provision giving boards the power to expel students engaged in "refractory" conduct. Some types of violent conduct may be so dangerous that a student's mere presence in school may be injurious to others. In its *Zero Tolerance Policy*, the Scarborough Board has given its students and community notice that certain behaviours are so dangerous as to require a principal and supervisory officer to make a recommendation to the Board for expulsion. These are:

- possession of a non-prohibited weapon for the second time (the first occurrence results in a ten-day suspension)
- possession of a firearm, a replica firearm, or any other prohibited weapon
- using any weapon in an assault, an attempted assault, or in a threatening or intimidating manner
- in the absence of mitigating circumstance, assaulting someone with such excessive force that a serious injury requiring formal medical intervention results

The notion of expulsion as a "lifetime ban from school" suggests to some that a school board is giving up on a student — in effect, consigning the young person to a lifetime devoid of education. In fact, what an expulsion means is that, at that time in his or her life, a student's behaviour is so out of control that it is no longer appropri-



The Canadian Association For Safe Schools

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ate for him or her to be in a regular school setting.

The Minister of Education and Training has recently chosen the Metropolitan Toronto School Board as the site for a model program to meet the needs of expelled students. The focus of this program is on rehabilitating behaviour to the point that the student would be able to return safely to the regular school setting. The Scarborough Board of Education would be quite willing to consider an application for reinstatement from any expelled student who had successfully participated in this type of program or who had engaged in other forms of counselling and behaviour modification therapy, either privately or through community health agencies. *The Education Act* provides that a school board may, at its discretion, readmit a student who has been expelled. Expulsion is not intended to mean the end of the line but it does signify very clearly that the train is seriously off the tracks.

After one full year, the results of the *Zero Tolerance Policy* have been very encouraging. Parental reaction to the policy has been overwhelmingly positive, as has that of students, teachers, and the general public. Although there have been eight expulsions under the policy, four of the expelled students are currently involved in the Metro Program for Expelled Students with the understanding that they may apply for readmission to the Scarborough Board upon successful completion of the program.

The most pronounced effect of the policy has been in the area of weapons use in schools. Prior to its implementation, on December 1, 1993, there had been an average of 28 weapons incidents a month in Scarborough schools. Of these, 15 were for possession of a weapon, 8 were for threatening with a weapon, and 5 were for assault with a weapon. In the nine school months since the policy has been in effect, weapons incidents have dropped to an average of about 11 per month. Of these, slightly more than nine have been for possession, while those for threatening and assault with a weapon have dropped to less than one each per month. As well, of the approximately 80 students suspended for ten days for possession of a non-prohibited weapon for the first time, not one has been recommended for expulsion.

because of a second occurrence.

Whether zero tolerance is the answer remains to be seen. For now, the policy appears to be having a positive effect in the public schools of Scarborough. Student attitudes towards violence are chang-

ing, and weapons incidents are down. Scarborough Board trustees and officials are committed to continuing with the policy as one aspect of a comprehensive approach to keeping our schools safe and secure for learning.

assessed by the case team every six weeks to see if progress has been made.

How will a student's parents be involved in the program?

Parents will be involved from the very beginning and will be consulted about the format of their child's program. In some cases, parents will be part of the case team.

Where will educational instruction take place?

This will occur at appropriate sites across the city. These may be at a library, youth centre, or a student's home. Students will learn independently, under the supervision of a teacher.

Who will decide when a student is ready to go back to his or her own school?

After the regular six-week assessment, the case team will determine a student's readiness to re-enter regular classes and may suggest that a student reapply to regular classes. Final approval to re-enter will be given by the student's local board. Students who re-enter regular classes will be monitored by the case co-ordinator to ensure that the transition is smooth.

Can students from other boards participate in the program?

Yes, boards from the Metro area may apply to the case co-ordinator to place a student in the program. If there is room, the student will be admitted and the cost to the board will be negotiated. After the success of the model program is evaluated, other boards outside the Metro area may wish to set up similar programs.

How is the program monitored?

A co-ordinating committee which includes Stan Draffin, Superintendent of Special Services with the Metro Board, Dr. Fred Mathews of Central Toronto Youth Services, and Dr. Jean Hewitt, Co-ordinator of Violence-Free Schools for the Ministry of Education and Training will monitor the program.

Who else has input to the project?

An advisory committee which will include students, parents, and school and community representatives will have regular input as the project develops.

The Model Program for Expelled Students

Strategies for Helping Violent Students to Turn Their Lives Around

Jean Hewitt

*Violence Prevention Secretariat,
Ministry of Education and Training*

The Ministry of Education and Training and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board have jointly funded a model program that will allow students expelled from school for violent behaviour to continue their education. Students who have been expelled are offered the program, and if they choose to become involved, they work on individual plans set up by a case team and approved by their family. The case team is made up of a case co-ordinator, a psychiatrist, a teacher, a youth worker, and a board liaison person.

It is hoped that the model project will provide important information about strategies which are effective in helping violent students to turn their lives around — strategies which can be used within schools or alternative programs across the province in the coming years.

Following are some basic questions and answers about the model program for expelled students.

Why was the Metro Toronto Board program chosen?

The Metro Board program most closely met the criteria set by the Ministry. Some of the positive features of the program include:

- the program is not site-dependent (i.e., the location of the program can be adapted to the needs of the student)
- the content of the program is adapted for each student
- it uses existing school personnel
- many boards co-operate in program delivery

How many students will the program accommodate at any one time?

A maximum of 12 students will be in the program at any one time. If 12 students are already in the program, a waiting list will be established. In some circumstances, the program may be able to handle more than 12 students.

Can a student refuse to attend the program?

Entry into the program is entirely voluntary. A student and his or her family may choose that the student not attend the program.

Will all the students in the program take classes together?

No. Students in the program will work independently and will not meet each other.

How long will each student stay in the program?

The progress of each student will be

Voices Within the Schools

"Do You Personally Feel Safe in Your School?"

A Survey of Ontario School Employees

Bill McIntosh

Director, Etobicoke Board of Education

In June 1991 a subcommittee of the Safe School Task Force was formed to consider the changing role of the teacher, administrator, and business and support staff. The group's mandate was to examine employee groups in relation to the issue of safe schools. The subcommittee was formed by a group of individuals taking part in the Safe Schools Task Force. Several boards of education, including York Region, Etobicoke, Metro Toronto, and Metro Separate, along with Ontario CUPE locals and Scranton Corporation contributed financial support and co-operation.

The subcommittee designed a survey that would provide an information database of about safety issues in Ontario schools. The goal was to establish what various employee groups believe is the current status of safety in the schools. Changes in attitudes could then be monitored through future surveys. The survey findings represented both rural and urban schools, separate and public, elementary and secondary, English- and French-language, and schools with large and small enrolments.

During the 1992/93 school year, surveys were sent to approximately 700 schools. The surveys were completed by a principal or vice-principal, teacher, secretary, and caretaker/custodian in each school. Of the 2800 surveys distributed, 1440 were returned — a 51.4 percent response rate. The responses to the survey were evenly distributed across the four employee groups.

The first question was, "Do you per-

sonally feel safe in your school?" Over 94 percent of the respondents said yes.

Respondents were asked if they feel as safe in their schools now as they did five years ago. About 68 percent said yes. Principals and vice-principals of large, urban secondary schools were more apt than members of the other groups to state that they do not feel as safe now as they did five years ago.

What Makes Schools Safe or Unsafe?

The final page of the questionnaire consisted of a list of items related to school safety. Respondents were asked to consider their personal perception of their school and indicate which items from the list make their school "safe" or "unsafe."

Items That Make Schools Unsafe

The following table provides a rank order of the items that were rated by 10 percent or more of the respondents as making their school "unsafe."

Respondents Giving an "Unsafe" Rating

<i>Items in School</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Trespassers	30.1
Verbal assaults	25.1
Working alone	21.3
School architecture	20.3
Physical assaults	12.4
Weapons in the school	12.3
Lack of personal alarms	10.6
Lack of two-way portable communicators	10.2

The first question was, "Do you personally feel safe in your school?" Over 94 percent of the respondents said yes.

Respondents were asked if they feel as safe in their schools now as they did five years ago. About 68 percent said yes.

Further analysis was done on these items to determine profiles according to employee group, type of community, elementary and secondary school, or size of school. For example:

Trespassers

Principals of large (501–1000 students), urban secondary schools were more likely to state that trespassers make their school unsafe.

Verbal Assaults

Principals and teachers in large (501–1000 students), urban secondary schools were most likely to consider that verbal assaults make their school unsafe.

Working Alone

Custodians/caretakers of smaller urban schools (under 250 students) were most likely to feel that working alone makes their school unsafe.

School Architecture

Principals and teachers in large, urban schools were most likely to consider that school architecture makes their school unsafe. Traditional school design tends to make supervision difficult, leading to safety and security concerns.

At first glance, there appears to be a low percentage of respondents who rated weapons and physical assaults as a concern. It is important to recognize that three-quarters of the total number of respondents were from JK to Grade 8 schools, and in fact respondents in secondary schools expressed the majority of the concerns.

The committee believes that incidents involving weapons are a concern. However, across the province, very few employees have dealt directly with an issue related to weapons. This explains the relatively low concern expressed by respondents.

Items That Make Schools Safe

School spirit, or the sense of community in a school, which is often difficult to define, is first on the list of items which respondents feel make their school safe. Other items include: staff support, access to phones in school, liaison with police, and school administrative support. It is worth noting that many of these items

School spirit ... is first on the list of items which respondents feel make their school safe.

would not require a large monetary outpour to implement.

The following table provides a rank order of the items that 70 percent or more of the respondents rated as making their school safe.

Respondents Giving a "Safe" Rating

<i>Items in School</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
School atmosphere	90.4
Staff support	90.2
Access to phones in school	88.8
Liaison with police	88.0
School administrative support	88.1
Reputation of school	84.2
School discipline	83.3
P.A. system	81.7
School decision-making process	79.0
Location of school	77.5
Co-curricular programs	73.5
Parent/guardian involvement	73.1
"Permit" use of school	72.3

The following are a few highlights from the survey:

- most school employees (94.6 percent) feel safe in Ontario schools
- about 30 percent of school employees feel safe in their schools but not as safe as five years ago
- trespassers, verbal assaults, working alone, and school architecture are significant concerns for school employees across the province
- employees feel safest when working in a school with a positive atmosphere

where there is strong support from colleagues and the school administration

- a close working relationship with the local police and ready access to telephones were also important to respondents

Recommendations

The survey findings prompted discussion within the committee which resulted in the following ten recommendations.

- 1) That boards of education in the province establish, enforce, and support a definitive Safe Schools Policy and recommend procedures that address the issues of verbal/physical assaults, trespassers, and weapons in the school;
- 2) That boards of education and the local police force work co-operatively to establish procedures that will:
 - ensure the visibility of policy in the schools
 - establish preventive programs that would be presented by the police with support of the teaching staff
 - establish a partnership that assists the police as well as the board of education
 - facilitate ongoing communication with schools, the police and the community
- 3) That boards of education, unions, federations, professional organizations, and other groups work in partnership to establish procedures that address working-alone practices and other conditions that may make schools unsafe;
- 4) That boards of education promote conflict-resolution programs for employees and students;
- 5) That boards of education develop a system for recording incidents of violence in schools to plot trends, increase awareness, and develop proactive programs;
- 6) That boards of education continue to examine all available communication devices, including telephones and two-way portable communicators, to promote safety in schools;
- 7) That schools continue to promote and enhance the positive atmosphere, spir-

it, and co-operation that occur at all levels in our educational communities;

- 8) That schools develop procedures for dealing with crises and violence and that employees, parents, students, and police be an integral part of the discussions to establish, implement, and maintain these procedures;
- 9) That schools develop methods of organizing school programs and activities that minimize opportunities for violence in schools and discourage trespassers;
- 10) That the Safe School Task Force continue to co-operate with its partners to encourage further research on the topic of safe schools and to seek the necessary financial support and legislative

changes to ensure a safe school environment for all.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Debbie Carson, CUPE (Caretaking), The York Region Board of Education

Mary Cordeiro, Principal, Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board

Bob Cumming, Vice-Principal, Etobicoke Board of Education

Janice Dyer, Research Assistant, Etobicoke Board of Education

Don Hambleton, Educational Research Co-ordinator, Metropolitan Toronto School Board

Stevie Heaney, President, CUPE Local 2026, Dufferin Peel Separate School Board

Tony Lewis, Vice-Principal, The York Region Board of Education

Bill McIntosh (Chair 1992-present), Director, Etobicoke Board of Education

ly promoting a safe school/community environment

- to develop mechanisms to facilitate the expansion of Crime Stoppers, School Watch programs, and Street Beat programs
- to capitalize on the energy and input of the OSSSA
- to assist in the development of a student-based research instrument to collect data from which future policy can be developed
- to develop a strategic plan for the ongoing involvement of youth in maintaining safe schools and communities
- to provide a public forum highlighting the need for student participation in maintaining safe schools and communities

A Bright Light for Students

Objectives for Safer Schools

Michael Rubinoff

Student Premier of Ontario

The Safe School Task Force and the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association held a very special event on November 4, 5, and 6, 1994. Secondary school student leaders from across the province joined together for a conference titled "Safe Schools and Communities: Meeting the Challenges From a Youth Perspective." The conference was designed to provide a student-focussed forum to develop collaborative strategies for improving the functioning and enhancing the effectiveness of safe schools and communities. What made this conference so unique is that its outcome is a report on school violence and crime prevention authored by students.

The Ontario Secondary School Students' Association (OSSSA) is the official voice of Ontario's 800,000 secondary

school students. In the past, the OSSSA has tabulated student opinion on the issue of school violence. As a result of student forums from across the province, the OSSSA published two reports on the issue. The first one was released in 1992, titled *Project Base*, and the second report, *Project Safe*, was published the following year. Both reports were well received by the Safe School Task Force. The OSSSA is committed to solving the problem of school violence. As the direct consumers of education we have many insights into the issue of school violence. The time has come for government to listen to and implement our solutions.

The conference objectives were as follows:

- to develop safe school/community strategies from a youth perspective
- to lay the groundwork in developing a strategy for the involvement of all school-age youth in Ontario in active-

The three-day consultation examined, from a student perspective, the causes of violence and crime, solutions to the problem, and the development of an information vehicle. In addition, we discussed our long-term goals. It is my hope that the recommendations will influence policing practices, education policy, and amendments to the *Education Act*.

The conference was an opportunity for all students to take ownership and responsibility and buy into maintaining safe schools and communities. We recognized the problem and showed our commitment to solving it.

It is our goal to circulate our report to policy makers, governments, school boards, community groups, and other important stakeholders. In addition, the report will be presented to the ministers of the relevant ministries.

I would like to thank Mr. Stu Auty and the Safe School Task Force for allowing students the opportunity to give something positive back to their community. Too often we read headlines depicting youth in a negative fashion. The conference has allowed students to wipe out some of that negativity, and hopefully students across the province will be able to pick up their newspapers and start reading something positive about themselves. The conference has been a shining light in the shadow of violence. We will continue to strengthen that light.

Non-Teaching School Staff

The Forgotten Voice

Joe Divitt

*National Health & Safety Representative,
Canadian Union of Public Employees*

The following incidents are actual occurrences:

It's the end of semester, grades are done, time for the prom, time for fun. A couple of cases of 24 are hidden in that secret spot behind the high school before the dance starts. As the night progresses, the cases of beer slowly empty, maybe a toke or two is smoked, and as the night comes to an end, both the student and teachers leave for home. The custodian is left to clean and lock up. As part of the job, they also check the grounds. That's when the unexpected happens. The custodian comes across a group of students finishing the beer. The alcohol has endowed the students with false courage and rather than backing-off, they lash out at the custodian leaving him unconscious and eventually hospital-bound from blows to the face and body.

The school's swimming pool is used nightly by the public. One night an 18-year old shows off in front of the female lifeguard and refuses to leave at closing time. She asks the custodian (the only employee in the school at this time) to help her. The custodian ends up with a broken nose and facial cuts requiring 20 stitches.

A student that's been sent to the office for discipline gets verbally abusive and eventually throws a chair at the secretary, fracturing her arm.

These are just three examples of incidents that non-teaching school staff have faced. Why do these incidents happen? Maybe support staff are not seen as figures of authority. Perhaps because they can't affect grades, the students have no respect for them.

The *Education Act* and the school boards themselves make the priority list quite clear: students first, teachers and principal second, trustees third, parents

fourth, and then, last, the support staff. This also seems to be the priority list of the popular media.

The only protection for workers in school boards is the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OH&SA). While the intent of the *Act* is to protect the worker and to investigate incidents, school boards seem more interested in protecting the student than the employee. For example, not one of the students in the incidents noted above was ever disciplined.

What happens when the OH&SA regulations are not enforced? The Ministry of Labour is charged with enforcing the safety regulations. But do they? According to the Ministry's publication of "Facts & Figures" for the years 1989 through to 1993, inspections dropped 55 percent; orders issued dropped 40 percent; stop work orders dropped 42 percent; prosecutions went down 69 percent; fines levied against employers went down 69 percent; supervisor's fines dropped 33 percent; and workers' fines went up 308 percent.

The OH&SA is sadly silent on the issue of violence and the word "violence" is not even mentioned in the *Act* or its regulations. How do workers protect themselves or even begin to address the violence issue?

The Violence "Epidemic"

There is No Easy Cure

Kay Sigurjonsson

*Associate Executive Director,
Federation of Women Teachers'
Associations of Ontario*

If we are serious about ending violence in our society, we have to examine our own values and change the way we bring up and educate our children. In particular, we have to invest in young children.

We need nutrition programs in elementary schools so that there will be no hungry children failing to learn and developing resentment and anger. We need specialists who can save young children from psychological and learning dis-

abilities instead of the current situation in which schools can easily identify those children who are at risk, only to find that there is no money to employ the professionals who could save them. Of course, we find the money later when some of those children become perpetrators of violent crime.

We need to adopt zero tolerance of the dangerous attitude that "boys will be boys," when that expression means that we accept a kind of behaviour from boys that includes jeering, taunting, harassing, and brawling. We need to stop glamorizing violent sports, as if the viciousness that earns millions of dollars a year for its exponents is somehow a different

(and more admirable) form of behaviour from the violence committed by people now in jail for their efforts. We need to reduce our worship of competitiveness in sports and in life in general, and particularly among young children.

We need to work at flattening the hierarchies of our school systems which are themselves conducive to abuse of power. Most of all, we cannot just pass our damaged young children on to the secondary schools or to the world; we are setting them up for failure by our refusal to act when they are young enough to be helped.

The schools alone cannot be expected to solve the problem, of course. The whole community has helped to create the problem of violence and the whole community has to be involved in getting rid of it. In the last few years, the Federation of Women Teachers has been running an anti-violence campaign across Ontario, and everywhere we have found an outpouring of concern about violence

in the schools and in the streets and an astounding willingness to commit time, money, and talent to finding solutions.

In some communities, the citizens have turned their attention to ending assault against women, by publicizing the availability of help for women and children in crisis and by supporting shelters; in other communities, attention has been focused on child abuse; in others, the community has expressed concern about violence on television, and media watch committees have sprung up. And in all communities, a recognition has grown that the causes of violence are all related, no matter what the particular manifesta-

tion. Violence comes from imbalances of power, from sexism and racism and inequality, from feelings of powerlessness and frustration, and from inadequate methods of dealing with these feelings. In finding solutions to one form of violence, communities find answers to all forms of violence. Communities are also learning that there is no quick fix.

Violence is deeply rooted in our culture and will not disappear until we admit it, first of all, and then systematically work to eradicate the causes and not just the symptoms. Most important of all, we have to intervene when it will do some good, when children are young.

un atelier sur l'intervention auprès des élèves qui ont un comportement violent. Cet atelier sera présenté au personnel des écoles au cours de l'année 1994/1995.

2) L'AEFO a fourni à ses directions d'écoles un guide pour la mise en place d'un processus de médiation pour la résolution des conflits. Nous croyons que les jeunes doivent faire partie de la solution au problème de la violence.

3) L'AEFO a produit une trousse pour le développement d'un guide de l'élève et d'un code de conduite. La violence est mieux contrôlée quand les élèves, leurs parents et les personnels connaissent et acceptent un code de conduite faisant état, non seulement des comportements désirables, mais des conséquences lors de comportements violents.

4) L'AEFO a produit, en collaboration avec le professeur Jean Séguin de l'Université Laurentienne, un manuel intitulé «L'enseignement et la loi: guide pratique». Si les jeunes connaissent leurs droits, le personnel enseignant a fortement exprimé le désir de connaître les siens. Ce manuel de 300 pages est complet, facile à lire et ses renseignements sont à jour.

5) D'autres initiatives sont en voie de développement, entre autres:

- la préparation d'un atelier à l'intention des enseignantes et des enseignants concernant leurs droits lorsqu'elles ou lorsqu'ils sont victimes de violence
- des échanges avec les maisons de formation pour qu'elles incluent dans leurs programmes d'études des modules sur la résolution de conflits, la discipline et le moyen de contrer la violence à l'école
- une rencontre avec la Société d'aide à l'enfance pour la sensibiliser au rôle difficile que doivent jouer les enseignantes et les enseignants

La violence est bel et bien présente dans les écoles. Les enseignantes et les enseignants ne sont pas responsables de cet état de fait et il s'agit plutôt d'un problème de société. L'école étant cependant un milieu de socialisation, elle doit contribuer aux efforts de la société pour contrer et diminuer la violence. Il nous faut donc éduquer, former et appuyer et c'est cette responsabilité qu'assume l'AEFO auprès de ses membres.

La violence dans les écoles de langue française

L'AEFO intervient pour en briser le cycle

Guy Matte

*Secrétaire général et trésorier,
Association des enseignantes et des
enseignants franco-ontariens*

La violence en milieu scolaire préoccupe l'AEFO et ses membres. Une enquête, menée en 1994 dans les écoles élémentaires et secondaires de langue française, le confirme. L'enquête, menée sous forme d'entrevues, nous a permis de constater que 85 % des personnes rencontrées n'hésitent pas à dire que la violence est présente dans le milieu scolaire.

La violence en milieu scolaire semble passer par quatre étapes: 1) langage abusif entre élèves; 2) langage abusif dirigé vers les enseignantes et les enseignants; 3) violence physique entre élèves; 4) violence physique dirigée vers les enseignantes et les enseignants.

Les enseignantes et les enseignants constatent que le langage qu'utilisent les élèves entre eux est souvent vulgaire et violent. Il n'y aurait aucune distinction entre les garçons et les filles dans ce domaine. Le personnel enseignant se dit par surcroît étonné et inquiet de la vitesse à laquelle la violence s'est infil-

trée dans nos écoles.

On rapporte que la violence physique est présente à l'élémentaire et qu'au secondaire, c'est la violence verbale qui se remarque pendant la journée dans la cour d'école. Les incidents de violence physique chez les élèves du secondaire se produisent habituellement à l'extérieur de l'école et très souvent lors des danses. L'abus d'alcool et de drogues semble jouer un rôle important dans ces incidents. Enfin, selon l'enquête, les écoles élémentaires des régions rurales et les écoles secondaires qui desservent des régions géographiques étendues présentent moins de signes de violence.

Les enseignants et les enseignantes ont exprimé le besoin de formation face à cette nouvelle situation, les réponses anciennes paraissant inadéquates. Les élèves des deux paliers sont très bien renseignés sur leurs droits et n'hésitent pas à le signaler lorsque le personnel tente de maintenir la discipline.

En réponse à cette situation, l'AEFO a donc entrepris une série d'initiatives destinées à la fois au personnel enseignant et aux élèves.

1) L'AEFO a élaboré, en collaboration avec le Centre de leadership en éducation,

Violence in Schools

The Need for a Full-Service School

Pat Wright

Executive Officer, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Any remediation or solution addressing the problem of in-school violence must be appropriate to the nature of the violent act and sensitive to the root cause of the problem. It must be clearly understood that violent behaviour is unacceptable and will have predictable consequences. It must also be clear that in addition to punishment, there are other valid consequences, such as remediation and redress.

Policies and programs relating to violent incidents in schools should ensure that both the needs of victims and needs of perpetrators are carefully considered. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) has a number of policies which affirm this belief:

- a) students are entitled to an education in a violence-free environment;
- b) every school board, in collaboration with teacher federations, should develop a board-wide code of behaviour for all its students, with appropriate intervention and consequences for those students who resort to violence against other students or board personnel;
- c) in addition to expulsion and suspension, strategies for dealing with violence should include the provision of alternative programs;
- d) alternate strategies for dealing with in-school violence should include counselling and treatment in a therapeutic environment, conflict resolution programs, and withdrawal from regular programs;
- e) boards of education, in collaboration with teacher federations, should implement conflict resolution programs for all board employees, students, and teachers-in-training.

Violence in schools cannot be fully addressed without consideration of underlying causes. This consideration should address a number of different questions.

- 1) What are the underlying causes of violence and how can they be identified and addressed?
- 2) Is there a systemic flaw within schools which permits violent behaviour to be an unfortunate response by some students?
- 3) What are the social problems which may act as catalysts for violent student behaviour?

It is important for educators and stakeholders in different ministries, faculties of education, and school boards to examine these issues from different perspectives. Educators require training and

Educators require training and resources to assist in the effective implementation of violence-prevention strategies.

resources to assist in the effective implementation of violence-prevention strategies. Students must work with educators in determining strategies which will be effective within their school community.

An examination of the school's social climate is an integral part of any consideration of in-school violence. The complex and changing social climate in which students find themselves places them under enormous pressures. There is a link

between frustration and aggression. When students become frustrated in school, the frustration may carry over to aggressive behaviour. A mechanism should be provided to identify those frustrations before they escalate into violent behaviour and allow for alternate non-violent means of releasing aggressive energy.

Students who resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution will benefit from in-school services by school psychologists, psycho-educational consultants, and counsellors. Expelling students is a punitive response which does not provide them with any support to change their patterns of behaviour. It simply transfers the problem from one jurisdiction to another without solving it. Expulsion should be considered only as a last resort.

OSSTF promotes the concept of a full-service school in which students have access to a wide range of services needed to provide counselling and remediation for violent students and a variety of psychological supports for victims of in-school violence.

The Federation has undertaken to urge that:

- a) the Ministry of Education and Training collaborate with other ministries to focus on the roots of societal violence and to develop strategies, guidelines, and procedures to deal with violence in schools;
- b) the Ministry of Education and Training set timelines requiring school boards to implement guidelines and policies dealing with violence in schools;
- c) faculties of education provide teachers-in-training with classes, seminars, discussions, and written materials on the topic of violence in society and its behavioral implications and with training programs in conflict resolution.

It is more productive to have early intervention in conflict resolution and violence prevention than to provide treatment for violent offenders. Violence prevention requires well-trained educators functioning within a system where services are provided and supported by a team of knowledgeable and committed professionals working within clearly defined and effective policies.

School Building Design and Personal Safety

Defining and Correcting the Problems

D. Bruce Thorburn

*Chairman, Sub-Committee on
Architecture and School Design,
Safe School Task Force*

The schools of Ontario reveal an interesting cross-section of architectural styles. The oldest buildings are compact, multi-storied, in close contact with their communities, and show evidence of many changes in use since their original construction. Schools built in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s — times of rapid expansion of cities and the consolidation of the many small school boards — are usually rambling structures, one or two stories at maximum, often set back from streets and adjacent housing. More recently completed buildings have returned to a more compact design but incorporate features that allow for greater shared community use than was common in the past.

The many changes in educational programs, fire safety codes, building codes, and in consideration of the diverse users and uses of school buildings since the time of original construction have led to renovations to all of these building types. These renovations can present personal safety problems.

In the oldest schools, wide open staircases would lead from basement to third floor. These staircases were often found at entrances and in internal locations. Fire codes now require these stairwells to be enclosed to prevent smoke, fumes, and flames from spreading throughout the building. Unfortunately what once was open space, allowing visibility from floor to floor, is now enclosed preventing incidental observation. Combining these enclosed spaces with unwanted visitors may result in compromising the personal safety of the normal building users.

In a similar manner, the spreading middle-aged school presents problems

that were not concerns at the time of their design. The buildings often have corridors branching off in many directions because of later additions required to handle the continuously increasing enrolment. This sprawl sometimes results in a building with 10 or 15 public entrances.

The newest buildings, in addition to their planned educational uses, will soon require modifications to accommodate infants, preschoolers, adolescents, the adult student, and the disabled. Changing community needs must also be accommodated.

All of these styles of buildings have already been altered and will continue to require renovation as time and educational demands change. It is critical that safety concerns be addressed at the very outset of any planned change.

Planned Structural Change

Whether planning a new facility or altering an existing building it is necessary to start with a design brief (also called an architectural program, functional program, statement of user requirements). This term refers to the documentation which conveys the client's or user's requirements to the design team (the architects and the engineers). An intelligent process for developing the design brief relies on an appropriate involvement of (a) the users themselves — all parties who might be interested in the purpose, program and/or building format should be involved in early and ongoing discussions; (b) outside content experts where appropriate; and (c) a functional planning advisor.

The purpose of the design brief is not to design the solution but rather to define the problem. A few examples will emphasize the importance of the users' input to the design team as well as the importance of looking at the building design in context.

Problem

The building design should give a high level of comfort for all users of the facility and at the same time ensure that unwelcome visitors feel conspicuous and out of place.

Possible Design Solutions

- access to building will be restricted to areas with high visibility from both the building and the street
- bus loading areas and public transit stops will encourage pedestrian flow into these main entrances
- parking areas will discourage through traffic, lead to the main entrances, be in full view of building and street, and be adequately lighted
- landscaping design will allow for unobstructed sight lines from the building and street

Problem

Although the present program and enrolment is clearly known, future changes to either or both are likely.

Possible Design Solutions

- locations of future portables or relocatable additions will be considered so as not to compromise initial safety considerations
- proposed building additions will be incorporated into the initial design

Problem

The building will be occupied by different groups at different times. Security of personal information data — both print and electronic — must be maintained.

Possible Design Solutions

- areas to be used in evenings and weekends will be located to allow for use without necessitating unlimited building access

Problem

Supervision inside the building will be a responsibility of both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Possible Design Solutions

- corridor patterns will be simplified to give users a ready understanding of "sense of place." "Dead end" hallways and limited visibility sections of corridors will be eliminated

- student washrooms will be located in high traffic, visible areas away from remote exits and entrances
- staff work areas will be distributed in various locations throughout the building to ensure supervision flow
- in multi-floor buildings the central stair passage will be visible from all floors
- visibility between floors and between teaching areas and non-teaching common areas will be encouraged

Maximizing the personal safety of school building users need not add to the capital cost of a project. The most critical stage for safety concerns to be addressed in order to have efficient, economical impact on a project is the pre-design/programming stage. Later attempts to correct basic safety design flaws by electronic and/or physical changes to the building fabric can be very expensive and will rarely achieve the objective of security for all those persons who are expected to use the facility.

Linking the School and the Community

A Trustee's Concern

Mae Waese

*Trustee, Ward 7,
North York Board of Education, and
Chair, Canadian Association for Safe
Schools*

I believe schools have an obligation to create a safe learning environment. I also believe parents have the responsibility to deal effectively with their children's misbehaviour. Dealing with violence is a challenge. Anyone who threatens or uses violence must be held accountable for their behaviour. Perpetrators must face consequences for their actions. Parents must be kept informed and be consulted when incidents occur.

In recent years I have become increasingly aware that times have changed; not in my wildest dreams did I ever think we'd be dealing with an issue of guns in our schools. It became a reality for me, though, when as a trustee I was involved with the adjudication of a potential tragedy — a student had been involved in possession of a gun in school. I shudder at the possibility of what might have happened.

The boy was showing off. He was very young and had no intention of hurting anyone. However, had there been a conflict and the weapon used, the results could

have been catastrophic. Did the student understand the seriousness of the situation? The answer is no. Did the parents understand the seriousness of the issue? Again, the answer is no. In speaking with the parents, I found myself having to defend my position that a suspension from school was a fair consequence for the student. What I needed was support from the parents so that we could work together to help a very troubled young person. I found, however, that we were not in agreement on the necessity for any consequences.

It was then that I realized that the times had changed dramatically from when I first started as an elected Trustee in 1978. At that time parents' concerns centred on the quality of education, and classes took place with a minimum of disruption because of behavioural problems. Board of Education budgets did not then have to include funding for security measures, security personnel, or professional development in the area of conflict management for staff, or peer mediation for students. However, today you will find these expenditures in most board budgets.

With respect to school construction, when plans were developed with community input, there was no discussion about security. Quite the reverse, the focus was on bringing in the community and welcoming all-comers to the community

school. Only later did the Board need a policy on the registration of visitors to the school or the need to invoke the trespassing laws. The construction of schools now takes into consideration the physical safety of both students and staff, including teachers, caretakers, and secretaries.

Remember Elmer the Safety Elephant? Policing organizations working with schools focussed mainly on programs like Elmer the Safety Elephant, to teach children about road safety. Today, more and more, the police must work directly with school personnel on violence-related issues. Violence in the schools, as it reflects society as a whole, is a growing concern, that like any disease, must be eradicated.

Trustees are the direct link between community and schools. We can be seen as a barometer of society's concerns, and as trustees we reflect our communities when developing policies and directions for our boards. What I've been seeing over the past 15 years is a change in community focus. Community focus used to be primarily on program — today it is equally on safety. Choices are becoming more difficult — for teachers, for parents in the choice of school, for kids in the choice of their social groups, and for trustees in meeting legislation with respect to suspensions and expulsions. I'm faced with situations that are ever more difficult to resolve.

Educators need trustee and community support in some very difficult times. Boards of education have developed an awareness and an understanding of the root causes of youth violence; they must develop policies and become partners with the other organizations in society that work to combat violence and promote safety and security.

The question for me was how I, as a trustee, could make a difference. My involvement with the Canadian Association for Safe Schools over the last four years has provided me with an understanding of and perspective on the problem. It has helped me to look beyond the boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto to boards across Canada as they face similar pressures, and to join the work to seek solutions.

It's important for me, as I look to the future, that trustees support and encourage those who are working within the Safe Schools movement.

Perspectives and Responses

School Violence – Its Roots, Interventions, and Challenges

A Conversation with Guest Editor Stuart Auty;

Dan Offord, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Centre for

Studies of Children at Risk, Chedoke-McMaster Hospital; and

Fred Mathews, Community Psychologist, Central Toronto Youth Services.

In a survey across the province, we asked kids from 6 to 20 what they felt about their life in Ontario.

One of the themes that came out was that these children wanted an opportunity to give back to the community.

Stu We acknowledge that there has been an increase in school violence with children and youth. The focus here is whether the roots of violence have changed and if so, why?

Dan One should distinguish between the rate of violent behaviour and the form it takes — instead of using fists in fighting they use weapons and guns. Things happen now that didn't happen in the '60s.

Families have changed dramatically. In 1961, about two-thirds of Canadian families consisted of the male wage-earner and the stay-at-home spouse. That accounts for only about 12 percent of families now. In Ontario, more than 70 percent of kids are in preschool or some non-parental working arrangement, so you find that families have changed very much. The divorce rate has gone up. In Canada, one-third of all present marriages will end in divorce. So you have very different arrangements with families where both parents attend work, where the kids are cared for outside the home, and where you're going to have an increased number of single parents and reconstituted families.

Also, the social climate itself is changing. When I was growing up, the family,

the school, and the church were huge factors which had controlling and influencing effects on kids' behaviours, but now you find that the media and peer groups have become more important than they were before. There's violence on television, and the kids most at risk for violent behaviour are the ones that apparently watch the most TV and the most violent programs. The other effect of TV, which I think hasn't been well described, is that it puts one's accomplishments against the background of the world. So kids know now whether they're poor or not, know the extent to which they are included in mainstream advantages of society in a way that certainly I didn't know when I was growing up.

The kinds of services that have been in place to deal with kids that show initial stages of violent behaviour are really tied much more to traditional families and the way things used to be. And I think it's been very difficult to get services to families and kids who are at the beginning stages of violence — it's hard to get the families to services and hard to get the families to be compliant.

I also think that the central community may have weakened. A generation ago, in many instances, there was the feeling that a community had much more responsibility.

Stu Fred, what thoughts do you have on the changes in the roots of violence and the factors existing today that perhaps didn't exist in the past?

Fred It is difficult to talk about whether in fact we are seeing more or if it's being reported more. Yet the type of violence has definitely become more serious with the appearance of weapons. Where you once might have had a fight outside a school between a couple of individuals, you now have groups of kids that are stepping in and not just stepping in to have a fight, but there's a grudge that stays there. There's a history of conflict between groups which stays within the schools, within the community, over years.

There are many cultural groups in Canada now that weren't here years ago, and they are coming into conflict for a lot of different reasons, mainly because those kids are really isolated and feel marginalized and very confused.

I also think that, in many cases, the problem of youth violence reflects what I would call a breach of trust, of a sacred pact, between adults and children. We are leaving the socialization of kids more and more up to institutions; there has been something of an abdication of responsibility towards children by adults in our culture. Dan raised an interesting point about television bringing the standard against which you measure your own life and that standard is not a world standard. I think that as the world has shrunk, kids have come to see things that perhaps kids wouldn't have seen before — murders and extreme forms of violence in entertainment and on the news — on a large scale and very rapidly. Kids look at the adult world, and say, "Well, adults cause wars and are violent with one another. They can't protect us." A lot of kids don't go to the police, they don't go to teachers, because they don't see that anybody is really responding to their issues and concerns about violence. They're learning that violence is random. They learn when they look at issues of family violence and child abuse — and maybe their own experience of that and that of their friends — that adults can hurt you. We tend to have become very much a society based on Social Darwinism, you look after yourself.

Stu You mentioned cultural group conflict. How would you tie that into some of the concerns regarding groups who stake out territories, whether it's school washrooms or halls? There is a feeling that is a prelude to gang development. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Fred When you look at that behaviour, it very much illuminates adolescent developmental needs for affiliation,



The problem of youth violence reflects what I would call a breach of trust, of a sacred pact, between adults and children.

— Fred Mathews

belonging, self-esteem, connection. What kids get in that gang/group involvement is very natural and normal for kids, and there can be many positive aspects for kids in what we call "gangs." They're telling us in some ways what they're not getting from us as a community and what they're not getting from us as adults and what they're not getting from their culture. You often hear of gangs being called "families." While they are in many respects dysfunctional, they certainly are meeting a lot of needs for affiliation and mastery and power and connection and belonging that kids aren't experiencing from their culture. The natural extension of that is, of course, "We're going to define our belonging in terms of our territories; we are going to protect ourselves because we don't feel that you can protect us." It is very much an extension of nor-

mal, healthy adolescent development and of our breaking this pact of trust between adults and kids.

Stu Dan, do you feel that this group development is in fact filling a gap that the families don't provide?

Dan Yes, and I like the way Fred put it, as an extension of normal adolescent development. I think also it's not just that the families don't fulfil young people's needs but also that the other mainline institutions are not fulfilling them either, including things like community recreation programs and the schools. So I think that there is a role for these other mainline community services and institutions for children to take responsibility for some of the needs that adolescents have. For example, one thing that is lacking in Canada is recreation programs for all children. We believe in universality for children and youth, but the test of universality includes not just equal access but equal participation and, in the end, equal outcomes. Universality must include all the outside-the-home programs that you and I value for our kids that tend not to be available, regardless of whether we say they're universal or not, for kids who are at risk for violence.

Stu One of the criticisms of student organizations is that they don't include the kids that need help the most. How do you see getting at that issue?

Dan I think that is an issue has to do with accountability. Take peer counselling as an example. Peer counsellors tend to be "all-Canadian" kids, and they also tend to be ones who are doing well, and they are almost all girls. There's a lot of money being spent on peer-counselling programs, and we don't know the extent to which these programs do more good than harm and for what groups of kids. There is a need for models where the peer intervention would appeal to at-risk kids. There is evidence on the recreation side that when at-risk kids are given equal access with no stigmatization, they do come out in large numbers.

Stu Fred, how do we get at youth who are disaffected, how do we get at their

inner thoughts and find out what moves them?

Fred Part of the problem we have with the programs we offer is that we tend to be very prescriptive of what the problems and solutions are. We say to kids, "Okay, we've got this great idea, how many of you want to jump on board?" Dan's right, you get the student-council kid who will come out and who's articulate and has a sense of hope. I think before we do anything, we have to recognize that people are not going to get involved in an anti-violence program or make a contribution to a school or a community or a society unless they have a sense of hope, a sense of the future.

When we're asking them to get involved, instead of coming up with our own problem definitions and solution definitions, the first thing we should say is, "Look, we don't know about you guys in the school, but we're feeling that's there a lot of stress and tension and we want to get some ideas about where you see a problem." Let kids decide the problems first, and then also work with them to find the solutions. Sometimes kids will define what the problem is very differently than the school administration will. It gives the school a broader range of options. It's saying to the kids, "You tell us what you think the problem is from your world view, we'll give you our ideas, and in this dialogue we'll perhaps find solutions that neither one of us would have come up with on our own." It creates a sense of hope and a sense of self-esteem, because now the kids are saying, "If you're listening to us, maybe we can make a difference here."

Stu In earlier times, the child worked and helped to support the family. Today the child isn't really needed within the family unit for survival purposes. Are kids are looking for reasons to be?

Dan In a survey across the province, we asked kids from 6 to 20 what they felt about their life in Ontario. One of the themes that came out was that these children wanted an opportunity to give back to the community. They wanted to be seen as meaningful participants: they were willing to volunteer; they wanted

opportunities to do this. My own clinical experience is that there's a tremendous reservoir of youth wanting to do things that are meaningful for other sectors of society and what needs to be done is to give them that opportunity.

Fred It's very much a question of recognizing that kids are members of our society. We don't test them enough with responsibilities and honour that they are the experts about their own lives and their own situations. I think that's been a mistake. They don't feel they're valued, they don't feel they belong, and they're right.

Stu Dan, would you comment on the importance of early intervention?

Dan Most of the focus on violence is on kids who are violent. Clearly these kids have to be dealt with effectively, but the problem is that there have to be other kinds of programs, some of which all kids get and some which may be targeted. In each case, these programs have to be evaluated for their effectiveness. One of the things we're involved in is to see if you take kids from kindergarten to Grade 3, to what extent can you turn off anti-social behaviour in its beginning stages by some combination of social skills training in the classroom, parent education, and by helping kids with their academic performance, particularly in reading. Now I don't expect that kind of program to turn off all beginning anti-social behaviour, but the issue is to what extent does it take the top off kids with anti-social behaviour and cool it down. Targeted programs come in next, and the whole clinical endeavour becomes much more manageable. A sub-group that's very serious is the kids whose anti-social behaviour does not start in adolescence but has its roots much earlier, extending back into the preschool and early school years.

Stu Were you able in the evaluation that you did to differentiate between programs that in fact were people-driven and entirely dependent upon the person who had developed and implemented the program as opposed to transferable programs that would stay in place after that initial burst of energy dissipated?



... it's not just that the families don't fulfil young people's needs but also that the other mainline institutions are not fulfilling them either....

— Dan Offord

Dan You've hit on a major issue. The ones that work tend not to be transferable, not to help any other group of kids except the ones they were applied to. Yet, also, if a program appears to work, it won't be long before the middle class takes it over and the kids for whom it was intended in the first place are left out. This includes things like summer camps, recreation programs, Montessori schools. There's a long list of activities that started off as something for poor kids and then the middle class took them over.

Stu In terms of early intervention, how do you get at those children in an effective way?

Fred I would take early intervention back to the prenatal level. We can attenuate a lot of the effects of living in poverty or a lot of the things that put kids at risk or make them vulnerable to involvement in aggressive behaviour or violent behaviour anywhere along the developmental continuum. We know where the poor kids are. We know what the factors are that predispose kids to certain kinds of difficulties in their lives. That's where to put the money, into those schools, into those programs,

whether it's breakfast programs, or parent support programs.

I think an outreach program to parents — they could be new Canadians or they could be moms and dads who are living in communities where there's a lot of violence — is essential. Give parents the skills to discipline and structure and nurture their kids. When you get involved with a family after the kid has committed a violent act in school, you typically find a very terrified parent, a very isolated parent, who really simply does not know what to do. So part of our early intervention has to be focussed on the parents, because that's really the most powerful healing presence.

Dan I would put in a strong plug to have prenatal programs evaluated, to see the extent to which they can attract high-risk parents. Violence and child abuse are high-profile issues, but they are embedded in major problems that we have with kids. The solution lies in interventions that are planned carefully for all kids, targeted kids, and then for kids with problems — all throughout the life cycle. That's what is needed.

Stu Another question that seems to pop up regularly deals with the intensity of violence that youth today are prepared to engage in. Do you have any feeling on the changes in behaviour that have caused this?

Dan I think something that Fred alluded to earlier on plays a part. There's a desensitization to life and to violence. You see it on TV, you see people killed in wars. You see it night after night and you become kind of immune to it.

Fred If you feed adolescents, for example, a staple diet of violence, most kids might be able to filter those images out and separate violence as entertainment from violence in the real world. But for the very vulnerable at-risk kids who've got a lot of damage and are maybe victims themselves, a lot of these programs that they're seeing on television give them a script to channel their aggression and their anger. I worry about what the models are for those kids. When people get shot on television, they just fall down. And I think some kids, after they commit

an act of violence, are shocked because they don't realize the image they had from watching television is not what a real wounded body looks like. In some respects there's a developmental issue here.

Stu How can fear of violence, fear for personal safety, have an effect on the school environment?

Dan The data on communities are generally concerned about how the communities see themselves. One could imagine that people see themselves as being in more danger than they actually are, but the fear must have an effect on the school situation. It must promote a gap between the teachers and the kids, and it also must make dealing with these kids like walking on eggs. You don't confront them; you walk around them. So there's never an honest exchange. If one is a teacher, and an authority figure, one may be in a defensive position.

Fred There's no question that perceptions either are reality or become reality very soon. We tend to see kids in groups walking down the street as gangs and thugs. That just widens the gulf between adults and kids. It also widens the gulf between groups of kids within schools, kids from different cultural backgrounds. They're fearful of each other because of the stereotypes that we have about certain groups. I think a lot of those perceptions and those fears cause kids to arm themselves. Unfortunately, simply having that weapon is a magnet. It attracts other problems.

Stu The Ontario government has mandated and supported the "zero tolerance" concept. I'd be interested in your views on the implications of zero tolerance and limit-setting and how this is played out in the school milieu.

Dan What happens to the kids after they're kicked out? There has to be some responsibility. You can't just kick them out. Where do they go? We know that when they're on the street they're at higher risk and probably marginalized to such an extent they get into much more trouble than they ever wanted to get in. If it's seen as the major approach to dealing

with violence, I think that's a mistake. We have to take a look at programs throughout the developmental cycle and at all levels.

Stu The underlying concept of zero tolerance is essentially that there be a limit-setting and a demonstrated consequence to an act of violence. Do you see limit-setting as a deterrent?

Dan One can make arguments that it might make things worse. We don't know. I think if there is zero tolerance, it has to be fairly applied so that there's no scapegoating going on. And certainly there has to be a safety net for these kids.

Fred When we're talking about responding to school violence, we need to factor victims and the other students into the mix. It does little good for a victim to know that the person who stabbed him has had a difficult childhood. So I think that accountability is absolute, but how we respond must be on the basis of the difficulties and the needs and the way we assess what's going on in the background of the young person who has been violent. If zero tolerance means being pro-school, pro-victim, pro-perpetrator, pro-community, and it is, as Dan suggested, operationalized in a way that is fair, does not discriminate, and gives kids a chance to have those needs met and their difficulties dealt with in a very caring, supportive way, then I think it's a very good policy. I think that zero tolerance to violence is a philosophical statement, because it draws a line around what we will not tolerate in interpersonal relationships, provided we expand our definitions to also include the wounds of words, racism, sexual harassment, homophobia, sexism, and those other kinds of things. I think if we're talking about zero tolerance, we also have to look at our institutional practices and look at ourselves as educators and adults and the role we play in aggravating certain situations and look also at what is structural and systemic. We also need to have a zero tolerance for those kinds of things too.

Stu You are the two most eminent authorities in this area in Canada, and I want to thank you very much for participating in this dialogue.

About Bullying

Understanding this Underground Activity

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What Is Bullying?

A person is being bullied "when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons" (Olweus, 1991, p. 411). Negative actions may be physical or verbal behaviours intended to inflict injury or discomfort on another person. Implicit in the definition of bullying is an imbalance in the strength relations of individuals involved in the bullying incident: bullies are always more powerful than victims (Besag, 1989). Bullying can be carried out by a single person or a group. Direct bullying is characterized by open attacks on the victim. In contrast, indirect bullying takes the form of social isolation and exclusion from the group (Olweus, 1991). The key elements of bullying are: a power imbalance, negative intent and repetition over time.

Is Bullying a Problem in Schools?

Evidence about bullying in Canadian schools comes from a recent survey by the Toronto Board of Education (Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). Some results from the survey include:

- 20 percent of children indicated that they had been involved in bullying more than once or twice during the term, either as bullies or victims
- 15 percent of students acknowledged bullying others more than once or twice during the term

- 23 percent of boys and 8 percent of girls reported bullying
- boys and girls were equally likely to be victims

Naturalistic observations of bullying and victimization on the elementary school playgrounds (Craig & Pepler, 1992) indicate that:

- bullying occurs once every seven minutes
- boys and girls engaged in bullying at approximately the same rate
- on average, bullying episodes were brief, approximately 37 seconds long.
- bullies use weapons in 4 percent of the episodes
- the majority of bullying occurred close to the school buildings

Why Don't Adults Know About Bullying and Victimization?

Surveys indicate that teachers and parents are relatively unaware of individual students' involvement in bullying episodes (Olweus, 1991; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1993; Pepler, Charach & Ziegler, 1994). According to a recent Toronto study, while 71 percent of teachers indicated that they almost always intervene in bullying problems, only 25 percent of students reported that teachers almost always intervene (Pepler, Charach & Ziegler, 1994).

In our observational research (Craig & Pepler, 1992), we found that teachers were relatively unaware of bullying and intervened in only about 4 percent of the observed bullying episodes. However, when they are present during a bullying episode, teachers intervene relatively frequently.

There are several reasons that we, as adults, are not aware of the extent of bullying. Bullying is an underground activity. Children know that adults do not

approve of bullying; therefore, children do not bring it to the attention of adults.

Children under-report bullying. Stevenson and Smith (1989) found that victims were unlikely to report to their teacher or a supervising adult that they were victimized (22% never told, and 59% may have occasionally told).

Victims may feel that they should and can handle the situation themselves or they may view the incident as minor and consequently not worth reporting. In other cases, the victims may fear reprisals and may feel social pressure to cope with their victimization experiences.

Children may also feel that adults are inept, uncaring, or unable to protect them from future bullying (Garofalo, Siegel & Laub, 1987).

Why Worry About Bullies and Victims?

Bullies

Bullying is a component of a more general anti-social attitude and rule breaking behaviour pattern. Longitudinal research on bullying indicates that 60 percent of boys who were nominated as bullies in Grades 6 to 9 had at least one court conviction by the age of 24 (Olweus, 1991). As well, over time bullies had a fourfold increase in the level of relatively serious, recidivist criminality (Olweus, 1979).

Longitudinal research on aggressive children indicates that their prognosis is poor. Anti-social behaviour portends problems in adulthood such as criminal behaviour, spouse abuse, alcoholism, anti-social personality disorder and other psychiatric disorders, and poor work, marital, and occupational adjustment (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984). Many bullies are also victims (Craig & Pepler, 1992).

Victims

Children become established in the role of the victim and, therefore, tend to be victimized repeatedly over time. Often victimized children are rejected by their peers (Perry et al., 1988) and are, therefore, at risk for subsequent adjustment problems such as depression and school dropout (Parker & Asher, 1987). Victims typically suffer a range of psychological reactions from mild fears, headaches, stomach aches, and other somatic complaints to school refusal, severe anxiety, and depression.

Are Other Children Implicated in Bullying?

The problem of bullying is not confined to the bully and the victim. It also affects other children who might witness it. Through the Toronto survey (Pepler, Charach & Ziegler, 1994) and observational research (Craig & Pepler, 1992), we have learned that:

- 90 percent of students indicated that it is unpleasant to see someone being bullied
- 33 percent of children said they would join in a bullying episode
- peers participated in 85 percent of the observed bullying episodes
- peers intervened and tried to stop 11 percent of the episodes, but were more likely to intervene in an anti-social or aggressive manner than in a pro-social manner
- peers intervened almost three times as often as adults on the playground, but adults were twice as likely to intervene in bullying episodes if they were present

By watching a bullying episode, peers may maintain or exacerbate bully/victim problems. Olweus (1987) suggested four social learning processes that may contribute to bully/victim problems:

Reputations of Bullies and Victims

A gradual change in perceptions of bullies and victims may maintain bully/victim interactions. Bullies may acquire a reputation as someone to seek out when in need of strength or protection. The victim may be perceived by peers as someone who deserves to be abused.

Social Contagion Effect

Both children and adults tend to behave more aggressively having observed aggression (Berkowitz, 1970). If bullies are positively evaluated by peers, their aggressive acts will serve as models for other children. Other children may join as co-bullies to gain acceptance from peers.

Weakening of Inhibitions Against Aggression

Bullies will usually be rewarded for their aggression tendencies by triumphing over the victim. As well as being rein-

The first step in reducing bullying is to acknowledge that bullying is a problem at school that requires attention, resources, and intervention.

forced, bullies may avoid punishment for their aggression. The lack of negative consequences for the bully may increase the likelihood of other children being aggressive.

Diffusion of Responsibility

In a group bullying episode, there may be a decreased sense of responsibility for negative actions among the participants. For example, when a number of other children are kicking a victim, a peer may join with little concern. The distribution and the dilution of responsibility of the aggressive actions may decrease any feelings of guilt and remorse after the incident.

What Should Be Done About Bullying?

School-based interventions can reduce bullying. A Norwegian program reduced the frequency of bullying incidents by 50 percent over two years. This bullying program also reduced theft, vandalism, and truancy and increased students' satisfaction with school (Olweus, 1991).

The implementation of an anti-bullying program is a slow process. The first step in reducing bullying is to acknowledge that bullying is a problem at school that requires attention, resources, and intervention. Once administrators, teachers, and parents recognize the problem of bullying, they can develop a whole-school policy to ensure consistent efforts to stop bullying (Sharpe & Smith, 1993). The school staff, together with parents, must set firm limits with non-hostile, non-physical sanctions for violations of rules. In addition, the school policy must promote co-operation in a school environment characterized by warmth, positive interest, and adult involvement.

These comprehensive efforts will reduce aggression and promote pro-social values and co-operation.

School Level

Suggestions for school-wide interventions include:

- educate school staff about bullying and victimization (e.g., identifying signs, locations)
- develop and communicate a clear whole-school policy
- ensure consistent application of the policy, with frequent review of its effectiveness
- increase supervision on the playground
- improve communication among school administrators, teachers, parents, and students
- listen respectfully to bullying concerns raised by students, parents, and school staff
- create a school climate which promotes values such as equity, respect, caring, and tolerance
- develop curriculum that promotes communication, friendship, and assertiveness skills
- avoid racial and sex-role stereotyping (e.g., males need to be strong and tough)
- avoid emphasis on competitiveness

Parent Level

To maximize the effectiveness of a school-based bullying program, parents *must* be included in the intervention. Some suggestions for parents' involvement are as follows.

- include parents in developing the whole-school policy
- educate parents about bullying and victimization
- teach parents to recognize signs of aggression and/or victimization in their own children
- expect parents to be included in the application of the whole-school policy

- include parents in discussion when their children are involved as bullies or victims
- provide parents with strategies and support in helping their children with problems of bullying or victimization

Class Level

There must be interventions at the class level to encourage children to approach teachers, to develop peer support, and to reduce peer reinforcement of bullying. Suggestions for interventions at the class level are as follows.

- educate students about bullying and victimization
- include students in developing the whole-school policy
- develop class rules against bullying and consequences for students who break the rules
- consistently monitor bullying and provide consequences for it
- conduct regular class meetings to discuss bullying in a non-threatening environment; these meetings may provide opportunities to model socially appropriate behaviour and conflict resolution strategies
- follow up on issues discussed in the class meetings to ensure the victims' safety and consequences for the bullies
- integrate issues of bullying into the curriculum through such means as drama, books, films, story-writing, art, and other activities
- enlist classmates students to help alleviate the plight of victims and include them in group activities

Individual Level

The bullying program must target the specific problems of both the bullies and the victims. Some suggestions for teachers' interventions with individual bullies and victims are as follows:

Diffusion of Responsibility

- talk with bullies to indicate that bullying is not acceptable and will be stopped
- fully inform bullies of the consequences

for bullying and follow through in enforcing sanctions

- inform bullies' parents and seek their co-operation to reduce bullying
- be vigilant in monitoring bullies' behaviours and attitudes; bullies often minimize their behaviours or blame others
- channel bullies' behaviours in more positive directions
- if the bully's problems are severe, obtain support and consultation from resource persons within the school system

Diffusion of Responsibility

- talk with victims to reassure them of support and protection
- follow through on victims' reports of bullying and enforce the whole-school policy
- inform parents and seek their co-operation
- help victims cope with their experiences and develop strategies to prevent future instances
- promote victims' assertiveness and confidence
- encourage victims to build friendships with pro-social children in the class
- if the victimization of a child continues, obtain support and consultation from resource persons within the school system

Why Act Now?

Bullying is a significant problem within our society. Both bullies and victims are at risk of adjustment difficulties during childhood that may endure throughout adulthood. Prevention and early intervention opportunities in schools have the potential to deviate bullies and victims from a lifetime trajectory of maladjustment.

We are currently evaluating a bullying intervention within the Toronto Board of Education (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1993, 1994). Through our observations and intervention efforts with bullies and victims, we hope to increase the understanding of factors that initiate, maintain, and terminate bully/victim interactions.

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It's How You Play the Game

A Proactive Approach to Preventing Violence in School Sports

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The Values of School Sport

Participation in sport provides opportunities to learn about competing fairly with one's opponent and oneself. Through guidance from the teacher-coach, students are given the tools to react appropriately when confronted with issues and problems such as cheating, fair play, and violence.

A May 1992 Decima Study reported that 93.4 percent of Canadians strongly or somewhat strongly agree that participation in sports is an important way of developing a child's personality and character. According to the Canadian Sports Council, "these statistics confirmed that Canadians know there is a safe, constructive place for children to play and grow and that this place is sport." We should be proud of the fact that given the large number of school competitions, which are often conducted in a highly competitive, emotionally charged atmosphere, violent incidents are rare. The reasons why school sport is virtually violence free are rooted in the philosophical foundation of school sport.

Violence-free School Sport

Although incidents are rare, it is necessary to be proactive to ensure that school sport continues to occur in a safe environment. The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) has the responsibility to address issues involving high school sport and is a founding member of the Safe School Task Force.

Most of the reported incidents of violence at school sport events have involved spectators rather than players, and some schools have actually banned spectators

from games. In early 1994, the basketball coach of a Toronto school told reporters that:

These kids just live in a more violent society and in tougher circumstances than what we knew. Violence at basketball games doesn't have anything to do with the players really — it just reflects what goes on in the hallways. Years ago there might have been a fist fight at a high school and someone got a black eye. Today's troublemakers play for keeps and they've chosen basketball games as the events to disrupt. (*Toronto Life*, March 1994)

The OFSAA believes that it will have failed if school sport competitions become closed to spectators. School sport should involve athletes, coaches, specta-

Most of the reported incidents of violence at school sport events have involved spectators rather than players, and some schools have actually banned spectators from games.

tors, and the greater school community. Cancelling or changing the format of events causes a loss of spirit in the community and removes an event which can promote good sportsmanship in life.

OFSAA Initiatives

As well as conducting workshops and providing information to member associations to help keep school sport violence

free, the OFSAA has developed several other initiatives, listed below.

Code of Behaviour

The OFSAA has recently updated its code of behaviour for athletes and coaches at OFSAA Championships. Transgressors will be subject to penalties, thus ensuring that there are logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour. A code of behaviour for spectators will soon be developed.

Coaching Development

The coach is identified by many high school students as the single most important figure in their lives and, as such, he or she has a tremendous responsibility in transmitting appropriate values. Unfortunately, the number of teachers who are committed to coaching has decreased with the impact of early retirement and the problems associated with Ontario's Social Contract cutbacks. Now 20 percent of school coaches come from outside the school. While many schools have put orientation programs in place to ensure that coaches adhere to an educational philosophy, these values are not always apparent. Ensuring that new teachers, and in particular women teachers, continue the legacy of co-curricular activity for students is critical.

Coaching development programs with an emphasis on educational values have been identified as a priority in the new OFSAA Strategic Plan. A new coaching manual, coaching clinics, and close liaison with the National Coaching Certification Program are a few of the current initiatives.

Modifications to Playing Regulations

It has become apparent that some forms of behaviour which are unacceptable in other educational settings — for example, "trash talking" — are acceptable in the professional or elite athletic world. It is vital that rules be changed and procedures established to stamp out such behaviours that could lead to violence. The OFSAA is working with sport governing bodies to ensure that at the school level, actions which lead to inappropriate behaviours will not be tolerated. The governing body for international soccer took drastic action to curb violence on the field in the recent World Cup with

dramatically successful results. The same must be done at the school level.

Event-Planning Initiatives

Today's sports administrators must plan carefully and budget for security expenditures for athletic events. The following is a brief summary of key items that school administrators should consider in keeping school sport safe.

a) PRE-EVENT

- a staff Facility Co-ordinator should be appointed for each event; this person must not be the coach of the team
- other staff should be encouraged to be in attendance at the games; volunteers are an effective deterrent to individuals who wish to cause disruption
- students must be informed that only cheers of a positive nature will be acceptable; chants, taunting, and so on will result in spectator removal. Pep rallies or pre-game announcements must stress sportsmanship
- the police should be contacted prior to game time when large crowds or potentially difficult situations are likely to arise; it is helpful for each school to let the local police know what is happening throughout the school sports year
- the police or other law enforcement professionals should be hired for events where there is potential for a problem
- prior to the game, the staff facility co-ordinator should meet with game officials and any law enforcement officials to review areas of concern and action plans should problems occur
- the student councils of schools involved in inter-school competition should be encouraged to meet on a regular basis to plan how to handle potential problems caused by inter-school rivalries; student councils of each school should be an integral part of any pre-game planning

b) DURING THE EVENT

- behaviour expectations for spectators must be publicized in programs and posted in areas close to the contest

- game announcers must be prepared and knowledgeable about both teams and present an unbiased commentary on the game
- game announcers should repeat key aspects associated with spectator behaviour; these include:
 - no movement from seats during the game
 - no taunting/derogatory cheers
 - support for officials
- the staff facilitator and law enforcement officials must be visible and accessible
- should an incident occur:
 - the police must be informed immediately — the safety of all concerned must take priority over game
 - offenders should be isolated from the rest of the crowd, if possible

- whenever possible separate fans from opposing teams
- at entry gate, school staff should check bags for alcohol
- c) POST-GAME**
- police/law enforcement and staff must patrol areas such as school parking lots and areas leading from game site to parking lot
- authorities should follow the crowd to parking lots

Summary

School sport programs offered in a safe-school environment can provide an opportunity for students to learn how to handle conflict situations in an appropriate way. Through sport, positive values are taught which can make a difference beyond the classroom, gymnasium, and playing field.

The Youth Leadership Challenge Program

A Stay-In-School Initiative for Youth at Risk

Robert Heming

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Recreation*

There are many students who we, as educators and counsellors, call "successful." These students achieve relatively good grades, participate in school activities, are accepted socially by teachers and peers, and cope with any number of pressures. They are growing up successfully.

At the same time we also encounter not-so-successful students. These students appear to have difficulty with their stud-

ies, tend not to participate in class or school activities, are members of gangs or lead activities demonstrating disrespectful behaviour. With these students, we find ourselves saying, "They have potential — if only they would ..." These "not-so-successful" students are described as "at-risk."

They are at risk of failure, of becoming even poorer students, of learning violent and truant behaviours, of feeling so discouraged that they consider suicide. Students at risk find it increasingly difficult to cope with school or personal issues and if little or no perceived intervention takes place, they drop out.

In July 1992, the Safe School Task

Force and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation met with the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation and the Bark Lake Leadership Centre to discuss the development of a program that would help these students who seemed unable to break the cycle of "growing up unsuccessfully." These were students who appeared to be "negative leaders" within their schools — potentially a very large group.

Limited resources are a factor in any new program, so we had to focus our effort. Which group of students would have a disproportionately positive effect on their peers if their drop-out rate were reduced? These would be students who:

- want help
- are not yet in trouble with the law but could easily be soon
- want to learn how to contribute to their school or community
- tend not to take advantage of traditional leadership opportunities in school but are recognized by many as having leadership potential

Over the course of a year, we put together a proposal for a program that would give these students some basic skills which they could use for success in school, future employment, and life in general. The proposal was forwarded to the Youth Initiatives Branch of Employment and Immigration Canada, and funding was received to develop and implement a pilot program. In January 1993 we created a support team consisting of the original group of the Safe School Task Force, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Bark Lake staff, as well as the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Federation, the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association, and the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council.

The Pilot Project

The Bark Lake Leadership Centre, located in a wilderness reserve in Haliburton, was established in 1948 to teach young people leadership skills. In developing the Youth Leadership Challenge Program, Bark Lake staff drew on their extensive experience in youth work to fashion a three-phased program based on a high-adventure/group-process model that required students to progressively

learn to trust and depend on one another to achieve individual and group success.

A number of school boards in Metro Toronto as well as one rural-based board readily agreed to participate in the pilot project. Each board designated a "liaison

In developing the Youth Leadership Challenge Program, Bark Lake staff drew on their extensive experience in youth work to fashion a three-phased program based on a high-adventure/group-process model....

officer" to oversee the selection of at-risk youth, "teacher-mentors," and schools, as well as to monitor administration and support for the project. The pilot project took place during the 1993/94 school year.

PHASE ONE of the project involved the selection of teachers who would "mentor" a team of four to ten at-risk youth from a given school. Each teacher-mentor, approved by the school principal, made a commitment to selecting and spending time with the students before attending Bark Lake, actively participating in the Bark Lake experience with the group and supporting the group in applying their new skills in the school setting or through a school or community service project.

Phase One also involved the selection of students for the program, forming the teams, setting basic goals and objectives, initial team-building exercises, and preparing for Phase Two.

PHASE TWO was the Bark Lake experience itself. This five-day residential adventure focussed on developing the students' self-esteem, problem-solving and communication skills, and "stay-in-school" strategies. Students and mentors, along with a Bark Lake facilitator, were required to progressively learn to trust

and depend on one another as members of a team. This was achieved through learning skills in leadership, team building, and in outdoor adventure activities such as canoeing, rock climbing, a low- and high-ropes course, and overnight camping trips.

In this phase of the program, the students were taken through exercises which involved increasing levels of "risk." The program started with fun, active, "low risk" activities designed to draw in all members of the group and increase their comfort with each other. As the group members attained a greater level of trust with each other, they were introduced to more challenging tasks. For example, students began with the low-ropes course (where they traversed cables 60 centimetres off the ground) and progressed to the high-ropes course (where they did group activities on cables suspended nine metres in the air). Though the course was extremely safe, the "perceived risk" for students was very high, and the resulting sense of accomplishment, self-confidence, and pride which they felt was phenomenal.

Students and their teacher-mentors then prepared for the next phase of program, designed to improve the long-term effects of the Bark Lake experience.

PHASE THREE projects, planned and implemented by each team to benefit their school or community, varied according to the expertise of the individuals in the team, the mentor, and school resources. The Team projects were implemented and monitored during the current school year. Some examples of successful projects included:

- "kids for kids" counselling
- substance abuse information programs
- school environmental projects

In all, 288 students and more than 60 teacher-mentors from seven school boards participated in the pilot program.

Did it work?

A condition of the project's funding was that it be evaluated by an external, unbiased source. OISE professor Edward Hickcox agreed to do this evaluation and his extensive report, with recommenda-

tions, was completed in March 1994. An excerpt:

"... We began our [evaluation] work in somewhat of a questioning frame of mind. We end it with considerable support for the ideas behind the project, and for the accomplishments of the initial year.

... This project attempts to get at a very important segment of the student population, kids who might be headed for trouble but who are not there yet. For a relatively small financial investment, some lives can be turned around. We think the project should continue."

Comments from student teams reinforce this assessment, for example:

"Bark Lake taught us a bunch of things like being in control of your life; making choices for yourself; helping people when they have problems; being a leader."

Based on the success of the pilot project, the Bark Lake Leadership Centre and the Canadian Association for Safe Schools have formed a partnership to offer this program again. Fall 1994 and Spring 1995 Youth Leadership Challenge Programs are already scheduled.

NOTE: Sponsorship is currently being arranged to reduce individual costs. A Fall 1994 and Spring 1995 YLCP is scheduled at BLLC. Contact the Canadian Association for Safe Schools (416-395-8326) or Bark Lake Leadership Centre (1-800-668-6638) for further details and registration information. Upon registration, a full step-by-step curriculum resource guide is provided to assist the school in developing this program.

Drawing Lines and Circles

Responding to Youth Violence

Frederick Mathews

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The title of this paper — "Drawing Lines and Circles" — is an invitation to adults to join with young people in a search for solutions, in terms of prevention and intervention, that will be pro-youth, pro-victim, and pro-community. Drawing a circle means moving past anger, rhetoric, fear, and blaming to stand with young people in a search for answers together in community. Drawing a line means holding young people accountable for their violent behaviour by setting boundaries and limits and implementing appropriate and demonstrable consequences. It does not mean simply punishment but rather finding ways to protect and support victims and searching for solutions that address the needs and vulnerabilities that lead young people to resort to violence as a way to deal with their problems in the first place.

Is Youth Violence Really A Problem?

According to Statistics Canada (1992), youth violent crime increased 106 percent between 1986 and 1991. It is impossible to determine if this represents a real increase in numbers or just reflects more reporting. Either way it is still important to keep in mind that violent crime represents about 15 percent of all youth crime.

However, it is too simplistic to reduce the problem definition down to a matter of numbers. There are other considerations that are equally important to bring to the discussion. For example:

- 1) A debate about youth and violence centred on whether there has been an increase obscures the fact that we are not yet dealing effectively with the amount of violence we already have.
- 2) The incidence of school-based violence is under-reported, sometimes by as much as 50 percent or more (Ryan, Mathews, & Banner, 1993). Many youth do not report being victimized

because they do not see what is happening to them as a crime, violent or otherwise. Girls still do not recognize many forms of sexual assault or sexual harassment for what they are (Mathews, 1993). Boys tend to accept their victimization without protest to avoid being called a "sissy" or "weakling" and the stigma of not being "man enough" to take care of themselves (Mathews, 1994). Youth are also reluctant to report because they do not want to be called "rats."

- 3) Many are worried that inter-racial group conflict, though currently not a major part of the youth gang/group phenomenon, may soon develop into a far more serious problem (Mathews, 1993). Many of the groups in conflict with one another were not in Canada in any significant numbers ten years ago. The spectre of inter-racial group conflict is real in schools and must be confronted.
- 4) Weapons in schools has emerged as a part of the problem, and an increase in the trade in hard drugs has brought with it the presence of guns (Mathews, 1993). A gun is a passport that can quickly take a young person from the status of a marginalized "nerd" to the "bad guy." The fact that young people are carrying these weapons out of a perceived need to protect themselves creates a learning environment full of fear.
- 5) Girls now account for 15 percent of gang/group activity (Banner, Ryan, &

Mathews, 1994) and at puberty or younger are as likely as boys to perpetrate acts of violence (Ryan, Mathews, & Banner, 1993). Violence on the part of girls tends to be overlooked or dismissed far more than it is for boys.

- 6) Multiple perpetrator youth crime and violence, or youth gangs/groups, is another aspect of the phenomenon. Though largely a street-based phenomenon when it emerged in the late 1980s, youth gang/group activity has evolved to the point where it has become more centred on schools. Groups have, to a great extent, replaced the individual schoolyard bully.
- 7) Perhaps most disturbing is the way that violence and contact with the law is now used by some young people as a means to status and self-respect among their peers.

There are also other studies which reveal a "problem" with violence in schools. Thirty percent of teachers in a province-wide survey of 700 schools reported not feeling as safe in school as they did five years ago (Safe School Task Force, 1994). Thirty percent of middle-level students in two Ontario schools reported feeling safe only sometimes or never (Ryan, Mathews, & Banner, 1993). Members of youth gangs themselves report feeling that youth violence is a problem and that gangs/groups are a problem in schools (Mathews, 1993).

Every adult reading this should take a moment to put themselves in the school and classroom environment many students face every day. Imagine yourself going to your place of work having to worry whether or not the person next to you is carrying a knife, gun, or other weapon. Imagine having someone extort a dollar from you every time you want to use the washroom. Imagine being racially taunted, or insulted because of your body size, sexual orientation, or accent. Imagine being shoved up against a wall, being knocked to the ground, or being attacked (swarmed) by a group of your colleagues who take your jacket or sweater or shoes as a trophy.

As adults, most of us feel empowered to take action to stop this behaviour; young people rarely possess the awareness that they even can. They are also

very afraid of retaliation. Young people often find it difficult to trust adults and adult-run institutions to respond to their fears about violence and victimization.

So where does that leave us? There can be little doubt that we have a problem with violence in Ontario schools. Of course, not all schools or communities are affected to the same extent. But young peoples' well-being demands we have the courage and integrity to respond to these perceptions and concerns.

Knowing how best to proceed will

Imagine yourself going to your place of work having to worry whether or not the person next to you is carrying a knife, gun, or other weapon.

require some understanding of at least three key issues: (1) who is doing the offending; (2) adolescent development; and (3) the process of searching for solutions.

Who is doing the offending?

Mathews' Law - 75/20/5

When we talk about the perpetrators of incidents of serious violence we are not talking about all students in the school. Serious acts of violence are usually the responsibility of a small number of youth. Some are also committed by intruders or outside friends and associates of a student at a particular school. That doesn't mean that the majority of students don't have the potential to get into trouble or inflict other forms of harm on their classmates. All students are certainly capable of acts of racism, sexism, homophobia, or even extortion and intimidation. But it is important to distinguish between different forms of violence because they typically involve very different types of students whose problems and difficulties may have very dif-

ferent sources or causes.

It might be easier to understand this point by applying a numerical conceptual model. Please keep in mind that the numbers chosen in this simplified model to represent the proportions of youth in a school are not intended to be a precise reflection of reality but are used for illustrative purposes only.

Seventy-five percent of the students are never involved in violent activity. These students are like gentle streams that run through all our lives. They are young people who are community-minded, like their school, and generally lead productive quiet lives. It's a shame we do not systematically acknowledge the positive and pro-social behaviour of this group. Unfortunately, they are the passive observers of violence in schools and are likely affected by it in ways we as adults do not truly appreciate.

Twenty percent are students whose behaviour can go either way because of their own vulnerabilities. They are in many respects sitting on the fence watching, waiting to see how school officials respond to incidents of violence in schools. They are young persons who ordinarily would not get involved in violent activity but who may feel empowered to do so because of a perception that school officials will not take victims complaints seriously or have failed in the past to hold perpetrators accountable by providing demonstrated consequences for their behaviour. Some of these students may resort to vigilantism to "settle their own scores" (Mathews, 1993). This group, whose behaviour may have been more contained in the past, may now be beginning to act out because of a perception that school officials, or adults, are not taking the problem of violence seriously. This group's behaviour may contribute to a perception that school-based violence is increasing.

At the end of the continuum is the five percent group. These are the students who cause most of the problems in the classroom or on the school grounds and beyond. Even within this group there is a range where the smallest proportion, maybe one percent or two percent, commit most of the very serious violent incidents. Students in this percent are also likely to have come to the attention of school officials or teachers before. They may have had learning or behaviour difficulties.

They may even have undiagnosed problems or are experiencing current and chronic life stressors unknown to school officials. They will almost certainly be youth that could be labeled "at risk" because of their long-standing and untreated vulnerabilities, marginalized status in the school or community, previous victimization, or other factors that leave them vulnerable to school failure, dropping out, or involvement in crime and violence. Many of these youth are, in effect, young offenders, a population that schools neither recognize nor understand well.

Developmental Needs of Adolescents

Another area that needs to be understood when searching for solutions to school-based violence is the developmental needs of adolescents and how these needs dovetail with violence issues.

The need for acceptance, approval, and validation from peers is great, especially in younger adolescents. Peer bonds tend to be very strong at this stage and typically supersede all other sources of influence. Adolescents also typically demonstrate a need for novelty, stimulation, and extravagant sensations and pleasure-seeking. They need to establish an independent identity apart from their families and siblings, experience personal efficacy and power, test limits and boundaries, and challenge authority. Adolescent males typically posture in a "macho" manner to impress male peers and compete for the attention of girls.

It is easy to see how these needs can be met through peer associations. If peer associations involve a desire to intimidate others, youth in these groups can meet all sorts of needs for power, acceptance, and personal efficacy. Status can be enhanced by involvement with "outlaw" peers. Being "bad" and having a "gang" to support you gives a youth an identity and a reputation that could not otherwise be achieved as easily or as quickly. It is this element of having needs met immediately that makes the lure and the hold of gangs so strong (Mathews, 1993).

Forming themselves into peer groups, "gangs," or "secret societies" is a natural aspect of child and adolescent development. Some youth even use names to describe themselves. The issue here is

not about whether or not a group of youth is a gang but whether that gang crosses the line and breaks the law. It is important to make distinctions between a group of friends who just hang out together, the group that forms out of a need to protect themselves from harassment or persecution, and the group that forms because of a desire to intimidate others or become involved in violent or criminal activity.

It is important to keep in mind that the term "gang" is a social construction and

As strange as it may seem, our efforts to intervene, regardless of how well-intentioned, can sometimes make a youth's life situation worse, especially if those interventions do not address the real needs of the young person.

has a social meaning. When one hears the word "gang" typically negative associations arise. Observe your reactions when you see a group of youth walking towards you on a sidewalk. The way you "see" this group depends on your point of view and what you may know or have heard or believe about youth violence and "gangs." Ask yourself how your perceptions might be affected if these youth were visible minorities.

When trying to deal with gangs/groups or other forms of peer associations, it is important for all of us to remember that breaking up these associations may not always be the best course of action. In some cases in might be more productive to give young people the skills and tools they need to harness the energies of these groups and channel it in a personally and socially positive way. This is a tall order, especially for marginalized youth, who feel they have nothing left to lose.

The Process of Searching for Solutions

Criminalizing and Accountability

When young people cross the line and their behaviour becomes dangerous and harmful to others we have little choice but to involve the police. Unfortunately, mutual mistrust between educators and police has made the formation of positive working partnerships difficult in the past (Mathews, Banner, and Ryan, 1992).

If young people cross the line, should they be treated the same as adults? Adolescents don't think like adults. Their decisions are very often peer-influenced. They make choices from narrowly defined options. Their decisions are often premised on limited information or irrational ideas. Some youth have few options to begin with. This is not to say that youth are not responsible for their actions. Personally, I believe they are. Rather, the point is that how we deal with it should be different.

Most youth "grow out" of their mischievous or illegal behaviour because the risks and costs of getting caught become too high. As strange as it may seem, our efforts to intervene, regardless of how well-intentioned, can sometimes make a youth's life situation worse, especially if those interventions do not address the real needs of the young person (Mathews, 1986). However, youth who are unable to prevail over their life circumstances can move from young offender to career criminal. How we respond to their vulnerabilities is central to the prevention of this transition.

It is important for us to make every attempt possible to offer these "at-risk" students alternatives unless their behaviour is so serious as to threaten other students or the safety of teachers or themselves. There is research to support the fact that students' criminal behaviour can actually increase once they leave or drop out of school (Shavitt and Rattner, 1988; Thornberry et al., 1985; and Polk et al., 1981), especially if they are committed to the development of a criminal lifestyle.

Limits of Conflict Resolution Programs

In their rush to address violence in school, educators should not make the mistake of relying on peer mediation and conflict resolution programs to solve their vio-

lence problems. There may be some value to these programs for some students, like those in the 75 percent category, and to some extent those in the 20 percent group as well. But they are unlikely to be of much benefit to the five percent who are the source of most of the serious violence problems. Schools that are relying on conflict resolution programs to solve their serious violence problems are lulling themselves into a false sense of security. These programs are not geared to address the often chronic and long-term vulnerabilities behind much of this serious violence behaviour.

Many of these "off-the-shelf" programs are poorly designed and are not based on any type of empirical research. Most evaluations of these programs reveal little evidence that they produce long-term changes in violent behaviour or risk of victimization. Some may even be doing more harm than good (Webster, 1993).

Making Interventions that Matter to Youth

The first question we need to ask is how can we intervene in a way that is pro-youth, pro-community, and pro-victim. This approach will set us on a very different course from just wanting to punish perpetrators.

Many school officials do not want to "criminalize" students for their violent behaviour. As a general rule there is a lot that could be said in defense of this position. All interventions should follow from the individual needs of the youth. Automatic responses will do little to support and assist youth to deal with the risk factors and needs that lead to their committing an act of violence.

However, because of its impact on victims, communities, and the school environment, we simply cannot excuse violent behaviour. The grieving parents of a seriously injured child will not be soothed by knowing the perpetrator had a difficult childhood or is experiencing current life stressors. If we excuse or rationalize violence, we support a lower vision of what we are trying to instill in our young, namely civility, respect, and pro-peace attitudes, values, and beliefs. Young people need boundaries and limits if they are to grow into adults who understand rights and responsibilities. Being firm but fair toward perpetrators is an approach advocated by many youth in trouble with the law,

Being firm but fair toward perpetrators is an approach advocated by many youth in trouble with the law, including youth gang members. Boundaries and limits create safety.

including youth gang members (Mathews, 1993). Boundaries and limits create safety. Those youth whose level of development calls for rules and sanctions will benefit from receiving consequences for crossing these boundaries, providing the consequences are meaningful and are tied proportionally to their harmful or illegal behaviours.

Sadly, some young people's behaviour is so detrimental to school or community safety or even to their own safety, that they will need intervention from the criminal justice system. If and when we evoke these measures as a society, we have an equal responsibility to ensure that these youth receive supports and services that will address the causes underlying their behaviour.

Though it may perhaps be an unpopular opinion, I honestly believe we would proceed more humanely and justly in our search for solutions if we just expected problematic youth behaviours and saw them as natural. If we would see youth violence issues as a community health problem, we would likely be more inclined to focus on the sources of the problems that lead young people into difficulties. A health model would separate the youth from the behaviour in much the same way physical illness is separated from the person.

Finally, a word about the process of searching for solutions to the problem of youth violence. It would do the cause of searching for solutions a favour for all concerned persons to recognize that the process of dialogue is almost always painful in the beginning. Sharing power, "turf," having to hear criticism, and

learning to listen to others is not easy. Whenever the process bogs down we will need to struggle to remember that we will most certainly share more in common than we will have differences. We all share the same hopes for our young, even though we may have slightly different ideas about how to solve these complex social problems or how to or create a renewed sense of community.

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School and Police Partnerships

The role of the police in these situations is complementary to the role of the educators; the police can assist not only in creating a safer school environment but also in creating a sense among students and staff that the school is a safer place.

SAFE SCHOOLS

The Legal Framework

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The legal framework for safe schools includes a number of significant issues and involves both the civil and criminal context as well as federal and provincial legislation. In addition, the implementation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as provincial *Human Rights Codes* has impacted dramatically on the legal framework relevant to safe schools.

Power of Police

The police have considerable power to deal with the issue of violence in the schools. Indeed, the power of the police is much more extensive than the power given to educators under legislation such as the *Education Act*.

It is essential that educators develop a good working relationship with the local police force. When an incident of violence occurs, the police should be called. They can decide whether or not to lay charges. The role of the police in these situations is complementary to the role of the educators; the police can assist not only in creating a safer school environment but also in creating a sense among students and staff that the school is a safer place.

Response

In Ontario, the *Education Act* places a statutory obligation on both teachers and principals to maintain and enforce order and discipline. Subsection 264(1) of the *Education Act* sets out in detail the duties and obligations of teachers and states specifically, in subsection 264(1)(e), that

the teacher has a duty to "maintain, under the direction of the principal, proper order and discipline in the teacher's classroom and while on duty in the school and on the school ground." Similarly, in subsection 265(a) of the *Education Act*, the principal has a statutory duty "to maintain proper order and discipline in the school."

What this means is that an educator *must* deal with an incident of violence in the schools. This does not mean that an educator is obliged to risk physical injury. For example, if a weapon is involved, the educator is not expected to physically restrain the person and take away the weapon. However, the educator must take some steps to deal with the situation. This might mean giving an oral command to drop the weapon and then immediately calling the police.

It is impossible to give a general rule as to how to deal with situations; nevertheless, if an educator uses common sense and responds in an appropriate fashion, this should be sufficient to satisfy the statutory duty.

Investigation

The issue of what steps educators can take to investigate a situation constantly arises. In *R. v. J.M.G.*, the Ontario Court of Appeal held that a principal has the right to conduct a search when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has something illegal on his or her person. However, body searches are not recommended; it is more appropriate to ask the student to empty his or her pockets. If the student refuses to do so, the refusal in itself is subject to discipline. The principal also has the right to search a school locker.

It is important to note that the Ontario Court of Appeal in *R. v. J.M.G.* made the decision notwithstanding the rights guar-

anted under the *Charter*. In other words, educators have a special place in society, and the rights under the *Charter* do not prevent an educator from fulfilling the duty to maintain order and discipline as required by the *Education Act*.

Discipline

It seems to be generally accepted that corporal punishment is not appropriate in schools. Section 43 of the *Canada Criminal Code* provides a defence for school teachers for the use of force "by way of correction," provided that the force "does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances." There are a number of cases dealing with corporal punishment and whether such punishment is assault or correction. For example, taking a student by the arm would not be considered assault but a stinging slap to the face would likely be considered assault.

In any event, the issue of corporal punishment may eventually be governed by statute or regulation. Corporal punishment is already prohibited in British Columbia and New Brunswick. In Ontario, it is a matter of local school board policy. However, the Ministry of Education and Training has indicated that it is considering an amendment to the *Education Act* or regulations to prohibit corporal punishment. For the time being, the Ministry discourages boards from allowing corporal punishment.

The most serious form of discipline is suspension or expulsion in accordance with the provisions of the *Education Act*. Section 23 of the *Education Act* is, in effect, a code for suspensions and expulsions. The subsections provide the authority as well as the process for suspensions and expulsions.

Subsection 23(1) of the Act deals with a principal's suspension and specifies the grounds. In 1993, Section 23 was amended to add a number of new provisions. Subsection 23(1.1) provides that a suspension cannot exceed 20 school days. This subsection also gives the board the power to shorten the maximum period that a principal may suspend.

Subsection 23(1.2) specifies that the principal must notify in writing the student, the student's parent or guardian, the student's teachers, the board, the appropriate school attendance counsellor, and the appropriate supervisory officer of the

suspension. In addition, the principal must give the reasons for the suspension. The principal must also notify in writing the student and the student's parents or guardians of the right of an appeal. This subsection indicates that this notice in writing must be given "forthwith" but does not specify any time period.

Subsection 23(2) gives a parent or guardian or the student, when the student

The most serious form of discipline is suspension or expulsion in accordance with the provisions of the *Education Act*. Section 23 of the *Education Act* is, in effect, a code for suspensions and expulsions.

is an adult, the right to appeal the suspension within seven days. However, even when the seven days have elapsed, most boards will extend the period and allow a parent or student to continue with the appeal. The board, according to one of the 1993 amendments, subsection 23(2.1), has the right to determine whether the student can re-attend school pending the determination of the appeal.

Another amendment that was implemented at the same time involves a review of a suspension. Subsection 23(2.2) provides that if a student is suspended for the maximum period, which is 20 days, or is suspended more than once during the school year, the board must ensure that a guidance counsellor or other appropriate resource person reviews the circumstances of the suspension or suspensions and, when appropriate, informs the student and the student's parent or guardian of services that are available from the board or elsewhere in the community to assist the student. It should be noted that an "appropriate resource person" might be a social worker but would not be the student's teachers.

Subsection 23(3) provides the power to expel a student. The power to expel is exercised by the board — that is, the trustees. The basis for expulsion is that the "pupil's conduct is so refractory that the student's presence is injurious to other pupils or persons." This particular wording has not received any definitive interpretation by a Court. In one case, *Peel Board of Education and W.B.*, Mr. Justice Reid commented that he thought the word "refractory" meant a course of conduct, in other words, more than one incident. However, the decision of Mr. Justice Reid was in effect overturned on appeal and, as a result, there is presently no definitive decision on this issue.

Subsection 23(3) also provides a code for the process. The subsection provides that the principal and the supervisory officer must recommend the expulsion. The subsection then provides for notice to the parent and the student as well as the teachers and also confirms that the student/parent has a right to a hearing.

In *Peel Board of Education and W.B.*, Mr. Justice Reid also confirmed that an expulsion hearing must be conducted in accordance with the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act* (SPPA). The SPPA gives the student/parent the right to require a full hearing, which would include calling witnesses, cross-examination, transcripts, and so on. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the provisions of the SPPA, in most cases an expulsion hearing can proceed based on written statements, with the concurrence of the parties. Nevertheless, a board can be faced with a situation where the student/parent requires a full hearing. The Scarborough Board has recently received considerable media attention for a number of full expulsion hearings.

Subsection 23(5) of the Act gives a board the discretion to re-admit a pupil who has been expelled. This is a very important subsection. Since there are no guidelines for the exercise of the discretion, a board can be creative. For example, the board can require that the student undertake specified counselling. The board can also examine the "record" of the student during the time that the student has been expelled. Finally, some boards require the student to enter into a performance agreement with the board which sets out the expectations of the board.

Finally, subsection 23(6) — another

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1993 amendment to the Act, providing that the board, by resolution, may direct that the powers to hear suspension appeals, expel, and re-admit — can be exercised by a committee of at least three members of the board. It should be noted that this committee would make a final decision which would not be subject to a further decision of the board.

Often issues arise about the question of extended suspensions. Subsection 23(2) indicates that the board, after hearing an appeal or “where no appeal is made,” may “remove, confirm or modify” the suspension. In a recent decision of the Ontario Divisional Court, *Faye G. and James M. v. The Board of Education for the City of Scarborough*, the Court confirmed that this wording gives the board the power to extend a suspension pending an expulsion hearing. However, the decision of the Divisional Court can be interpreted to mean that the board has the power in any event to extend a suspension. For example, a board could extend a suspension beyond 20 days. This would be useful when a longer suspension is warranted, but an expulsion is too severe.

It should be noted that there are a number of boards that utilize the extended suspension process. In fact, the Ministry of Education and Training concurs with this interpretation.

Exclusion

Another significant power contained in the *Education Act* that is often overlooked is subsection 265(m) which states that it is the duty of the principal to “refuse to admit to the school or classroom a person whose presence in the school or classroom would, in the principal’s judgment, be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupils.” This gives the principal the power to exclude persons from the school or classroom; however, this decision is subject to an appeal to the board.

There has been some question as to whether a “person” includes a student in the school or whether a “person” is intended to mean trespassers, parents, or other persons. In any event, this is a significant power.

This particular power demonstrates the need to complement the powers of the school with the police. If the school has a good working relationship with the

police and the principal gives such an exclusionary order and the person fails or refuses to comply, the police will remove the person. However, it is necessary to have a good relationship with the police so that they understand the extent of the power in this subsection. This power is different from trespass provisions in trespass legislation and, in fact, is more expeditious.

Criminal and Young Offenders Act Proceedings

As noted above, the powers of the police complement the powers of board administration with respect to safe schools. The same is true with respect to the *Criminal Code* and *Young Offenders Act*. Proceedings pursuant to the *Criminal Code* and *Young Offenders Act* are simultaneous but separate and distinct from discipline.

In the case of *Faye G. and James M. v. The Board of Education for The City of Scarborough*, which is also referred to above, the Divisional Court made it absolutely clear that a *Young Offenders Act* proceeding does not prevent a board from proceeding with an expulsion hearing. The Court stated that the *Young Offenders Act* was: “never intended to deprive principals and school boards of the ability to enforce order and discipline in their schools.” As a result, the Divisional Court confirmed that such proceedings are separate and distinct from board disciplinary proceedings.

Nevertheless, a *Criminal Code* or *Young Offenders Act* proceeding can supplement the powers of an educator. For example, when a person who has been charged comes up for interim release or “bail,” the Court has considerable power to impose conditions, such as:

- that the person charged not attend on any school property whatsoever
- that the person charged not have any dealings with any other persons who might have been involved in an incident

In addition, educators are involved in investigations and are often called as witnesses at the trial. After the trial, if a person has been convicted, the board can make submissions as to an appropriate sentence. Again, conditions can be imposed by the Court.

All in all, educators should consider

the powers of the police and the powers of the Court under the *Criminal Code* and *Young Offenders Act* as supplementary and complementary to the powers under the *Education Act*. Consequently, it is important for boards to have an ongoing liaison with the police and Crown Attorneys' offices. Some boards have a standing committee which involves the police and Crown Attorneys to review ongoing issues such as exchange of information, the process for conducting an investigation at the school, the process for the board to make a submission at an interim release or "bail" or for the purpose of sentencing, as well as issues such as restitution when there has been damage to board property.

Child and Family Services Act

When we speak of safe schools, we often assume that we are dealing with the issue of violence between students in the schools. However, in order for schools to be truly safe, we must also consider the possibility of violence against students by members of staff or even by parents. This is where the *Child and Family Services Act* comes in.

Obviously, if a teacher physically assaults a student, a criminal charge may be laid and the teacher will be subject to prosecution. Moreover, if the violence involves sexual assault, criminal charges can also be laid. As noted above, there is a defence in the *Criminal Code* with respect to "physical assault" related to "correction" and a long line of cases dealing with the parameters for the defence. This particular defence has no relevance with respect to sexual assault.

The *Child and Family Services Act* is primarily relevant to the issue of a child in need of protection. The definition of a child in need of protection includes such circumstances as:

- actual physical harm to the child
- substantial risk of physical harm to the child
- sexual molestation or exploitation of the child
- substantial risk of sexual molestation or exploitation of the child
- the child requires medical treatment
- the child has suffered emotional harm

- there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer emotional harm
- the child has been abandoned

There are other specific grounds identified in the Act.

Again, the provisions of the *Child and Family Services Act* may overlap with the *Criminal Code* or *Young Offenders Act*. For example, if a parent assaults a child, the child may be in need of protection, thus triggering the provisions of the *Child and Family Services Act* and the parent may also be subject to prosecution under the *Criminal Code*.

The *Child and Family Services Act* contains specific provisions dealing with the duty to report. Subsection 72(2) provides that any person who believes "on reasonable grounds" that a child is or may be in need of protection must report the

It is the duty of the principal to "refuse to admit to the school or classroom a person whose presence in the school or classroom would ... be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the pupils."

belief and the information to the Children's Aid Society. Subsection 72(3) states that any professional, which includes a teacher, principal, social worker, or counsellor, who, "in the course of his or her professional or official duties, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be suffering or may have suffered abuse," must report the suspicion and the information to the Children's Aid Society. The onus is then on the Children's Aid Society to deal with the matter.

A particular incident may give rise to a number of possible interventions. The incident may require an investigation by the school system as well as an investigation by the police and the Children's Aid

Society. In view of the multiplicity of proceedings, many boards have entered into protocols with the local police and Children's Aid Societies which deal with issues such as investigation, sharing of information, and follow-up with respect to investigations. These protocols complement the police and Crown Attorney committees. Indeed, a representative of the CAS may be on the committee.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

The *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1989 (FOIPOP) has implications for discipline in the schools. For example, when an incident has occurred, it is not appropriate for the principal to announce or circulate information which includes the names of the students involved in the incident. However, provided that the student or students are not identified, it is appropriate to provide to the students, as well as to the community and parents, crucial information regarding the incident and its outcome.

Similar restrictions apply to investigations. Although there may be specific exemptions in the FOIPOP legislation, educators should be cognizant of the restrictions and should strive to protect the privacy of all persons involved, including witnesses.

Violence Policy

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training recently released its "Violence-Free Schools Policy." Although the Policy is not a part of the *Education Act* or regulations, a board is bound by the statute and by law to comply with Ministry policy. This has been confirmed in a number of cases. The Policy forms part of the legal framework.

Conclusion

It is not necessary to be conversant with all of the implications of the *Criminal Code* or *Young Offenders Act* or *Child and Family Services Act*. The police, the Crown Attorneys, and the Children's Aid Society form part of a team that educators can call upon for assistance. As well, boards have legal counsel who can also play an important role in the development of policies, ongoing professional development, and dealing with specific incidents.

Schools and Police

Partners in Crime Prevention

David Christopherson

*MPP Hamilton Centre,
Solicitor General and
Minister of Correctional Services*

Today the role of policing has changed to meet a variety of community needs. Police officers do more than enforce the law and apprehend criminals. They provide a variety of community-based social services such as search and rescue, family mediation, victims' services, and crime prevention with assistance from local communities.

As we move into the 21st century, it is clear that the role of preventing crime is not exclusively that of police services. As part of community policing, there is a growing trend in which communities actively participate in shaping their neighbourhoods. The announcement of the Violence-free Schools Policy by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training in June, 1994, reinforces the partnership of police, schools, and communities. In keeping with the community policing philosophy, police services in many communities have established partnerships with schools; in some cases, an officer is assigned to a school. Through their visi-

bility and accessibility in schools, police officers develop trusting relationships with the students and provide education on safety, security, and crime prevention, as well as providing early intervention in cases of anti-social behaviour.

Community policing is both a philosophy and an organizational strategy that encourages community and police to work collectively and proactively in problem solving. It's an umbrella for police programs and services that allows the community to help police in delivering quality services which address public safety, crime and order priorities. It's also an implementation strategy for problem solving, crime prevention and crime reduction to improve the quality of life in communities.

Enduring examples that demonstrate the partnership that can be developed between police and schools include the Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP) and Very Effective People (VEP) programs. Since 1984, the majority of school boards and police services in Ontario have been delivering these programs to Grade 6 students. Through a partnership of teachers and police officers, lessons are taught that focus on values, making choices, responsibilities, peer pressure, self-respect, and lifestyle issues.

Another partnership is the Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving (OSAID) which focusses on the prevention of drinking and driving by students. Other programs that are growing in popularity and proving to be effective police and school partnerships are the School Watch and School Crime Stoppers programs. The School Watch Program is adapted from the successful Neighbourhood Watch pro-

Through their visibility and accessibility in schools, police officers develop trusting relationships with the students and provide education on safety, security, and crime prevention....

gram where members of the community are encouraged to report suspicious incidents and individuals to their local police service. The School Watch Program, however, goes beyond Neighbourhood Watch in that it encompasses all facets of school life. This includes developing programs and activities that promote and enhance positive lifestyles, safety, and security.

The Crime Stoppers Program, currently in some secondary schools, solicits tips on criminal activities on school property while maintaining the anonymity of the informer(s) and informs students about unsolved crimes on school property. This partnership program is administered by a high school board of directors that is responsible for fund-raising and the authorization of rewards, while the local police service is responsible for investigations and apprehensions.

These programs exemplify how schools can work together with police on initiatives that focus on crime prevention, early intervention, and safety. The programs also encourage students to assume some responsibility and ownership for their environment and work with school staff and police in providing a safer school.

The Metropolitan Toronto Police Association is launching the *Child Safety Handbook*, as part of a community outreach program to heighten awareness of child-safety issues. The Association is looking for advertising support for the 64-page handbook, which will be distributed to local schools free of charge. Anyone interested in supporting this project should contact Andy Johaston (phone and fax) at (416) 495-1436.

Working with Schools

The Street Crime Unit

John Muisse

*Detective, No. 5 District
Street Crime Unit,
Metropolitan Toronto Police*

Walking down the corridor she wondered if it was going to happen again. It had progressed from taunts to pushing, shoving, extortion, and then actual physical assaults. She worried constantly about being attacked by the group.

A prison scene? No. This is a 13-year-old girl attending an average Toronto school.

Her marks plummeted, she stopped going to school, and her happy-go-lucky attitude disappeared. The solution? Her family packed up and moved out of the city.

A little too dramatic? Somewhat far-fetched? Unfortunately not.

My experience as a kid in Toronto schools was one of fun and learning. Violence was rare and when it did occur, it involved two young men squaring off with their fists and, at worst, their boots. If there was intervention by school staff, then punishment was meted out, the boys shook hands, and the police were not called. They didn't need to be called. They didn't want to be called. The school could handle it.

In the late '80s, things started to change. Young people started to commit high-profile offences called "swarming." A group of kids would get together and attack a single person, often stealing an article of clothing. These crimes were not "typical" crimes committed out of need or greed. They were about belonging, about power and control, not about theft. Teenagers were victimizing other teenagers, and this phenomenon wasn't just the preserve of "street kids" but was in fact involving average young people.

Young people were committing offences on and off school property and getting away with it. One of the reasons for this was that educators were dealing with new forms of youth crime with old-

style solutions. They didn't seem to understand that an inappropriate response to a victim can send him or her underground and empower the offender. A vicious cycle was in place.

In response to these offences, the Street Crime Unit was formed in the spring of 1989 by the then-Deputy Chief William McCormack. The Unit, realizing that it had to do something different, approached local educators and proposed a partnership to combat youth violence both in and out of school. The Unit suggested a program that involved both education and law enforcement. Initially, school boards were reluctant to join because of concerns about their image and their ability to maintain safe schools, but they eventually relented, and the program began.

Young, hip plainclothes officers dressed in jeans and T-shirts became personal cops to particular schools. Carrying pagers to communicate with kids and educators, they ventured into what was for them uncharted waters. The partnership was not without growing pains. Some principals and vice-principals wanted nothing to do with police intervention. They wondered who these "Rambos" were. There were clashes of philosophies between police and principals.

The Unit was fortunate, though. There was a core of educators who understood that the dynamic of youth violence had changed — principals like Howard Gotlib at Riverdale Collegiate in Toronto who realized he needed outside help. He saw the bigger picture and was prepared to take short-term losses in exchange for long-term gain. This decision took courage because those short-term losses included decreased enrollment and intense parental, board, and media scrutiny.

Riverdale Collegiate is an inner-city school in a working-class neighbourhood of east Toronto. The school has a high academic reputation. It also has a unique problem. The school has a high proportion of East Asian students who, for historic and cultural reasons, are often reluctant to report crimes. Many of the people in the area come from parts of the

world where the police are corrupt. As a result, much of the crime committed within the culture goes unreported. Mr. Gotlib had a mountain to climb; not only did he have to deal with the "rat factor" attitude that young people have about not reporting crime but he also had cultural and language barriers to get beyond. He had to win the trust of his students and their parents, who were often fearful.

Detective Constable McKay, the officer assigned to the school, made a presentation to the students. The students were educated about youth violence. They were discouraged from carrying weapons. Youth violence was deglamourized. The "rat factor" was discussed. Students were encouraged to report victimization, not to retaliate. They were provided with support if they chose to take it.

Over time, a few students got up the courage to report that they had been victimized by criminal behaviour. Mr. Gotlib called in the Street Crime Unit, who responded promptly, and many young people were arrested. These arrests were not kept secret. The message got out to the school population that violence and other serious criminal behaviour would not be tolerated on or off school property. Victims began to feel empowered. Instead of living in fear, they came to adults to get an appropriate response to their problems. They stopped taking the law into their own hands. The balance of power began to shift.

The program gathered momentum. Detective Constable McKay often dropped into the school unannounced. He was encouraged to do so and made to feel welcome. The students called him "Officer Andy." They liked him. He met with the P.T.A., with the student council, with community groups. Mr. Gotlib and Detective Constable McKay visited local merchants, who were interested in helping. Educators, cops, students, merchants, parents, and community groups worked together to make the community safe both inside and outside of the school.

Over time, the number of offences reported dropped considerably as it became clear that violence would not be tolerated. Fewer students were arrested. More time was spent learning and less time worrying about safety. Not only did Riverdale keep its reputation for academic excellence but it quickly gained a reputation as the safest school around.

Since those early days, the partnerships have grown. The Riverdale example brought many more principals and vice-principals into the fold. The Street Crime Unit has worked with organizations such as Central Toronto Youth Services and the Safe School Task Force to advance the agenda of creating safe schools and communities for young people. This attention has raised community awareness and brought about change.

The Solicitor General of Canada has just released a study indicating that the community-based Five District Street Crime Unit is a model that educators and

police officers across this country should follow.

Recently the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training released a Violence Free Schools Policy. It requires, among other things, a mandatory response to certain crimes, an anti-violence curriculum for all grades, and a commitment on the part of all boards to create community partnerships.

The Toronto Board of Education has led the way by creating an excellent Safety and Security Policy. It should be required reading for all school boards in the province.

At the Street Crime Unit, we feel we are going down the right road, but it is no time to be complacent. We still have serious threats to deal with: guns are falling into the hands of young people; recent tensions between ethnic groups have erupted into vicious gang violence. The biggest concern, though, is funding. With declining public resources, community-based policing is often seen as expendable. But effective policing takes commitment, dedication, a relationship with the community. The resources must be there if we're to continue to provide the kind of police services our young people deserve.

Student Crime Stoppers

Today's Youth Taking Charge

Alex Williamson

Detective Constable, Ontario Provincial Police and Police Co-ordinator, Crime Stoppers of Haldimand-Norfolk and Tillsonburg

The aim of Crime Stoppers is to encourage the public to communicate information about crimes to the authorities. In co-operation with the local media, crimes are re-enacted on television and information is solicited from the public. Cash is offered for information that leads to the apprehension of the culprits and anonymity is guaranteed to the provider of this information. A telephone "tips line" serves as the medium for communication and the number is advertised widely. Civilian volunteers are recruited to form a board of directors to administer the program. Today there are 650 international Crime Stoppers organizations, 77 in Canada and 39 in Ontario.

The concept of a Student Crime Stoppers program borrows some of these technique and practices. In addition to ensuring anonymity and offering cash for information, the Student Crime Stoppers

programs also instill a sense of pride of the school on the part of the students.

The Ontario Crime Stoppers Advisory Board, headed by Chairman Vern Huston, has carefully studied the development of Student Crime Stoppers programs across Ontario and has appointed OPP Detective Constable Alex Williamson as chair of the Ontario Advisory Board Schools Committee, a committee responsible for ensuring the safe and uniform development of Student Crime Stoppers programs. Detective Williamson has been working alongside the Chair of the Safe School Task Force Stuart Auty towards achieving this end. The committee has developed suggested guidelines for the implementation of Student Crime Stoppers programs. It is their mandate to provide a safe and efficient means for students with information concerning a crime to pass that information along to the authorities. The guidelines ensure dialogue with police, where appropriate, and also recognize the need on the part of the educational community to deal exclusively with certain issues without police involvement.

Janice Schweder, Business Department Head and Crime Stoppers Teacher-

Co-ordinator at Hagersville Secondary School, says: "With increasing violence in our society, it is important that parents, teachers, students, and police share responsibility for safer places to live and to learn. This school/community/parent partnership with the police is a critical component in maintaining safe schools and communities." Ms. Schweder reports that after one year of operation, the program has solved a number of school crimes including incidents involving theft, weapons, car theft, and vandalism at her school. According to Ms. Schweder, these results are a very positive indication that the program does work and has made a significant impact on safety and security in the school. The Principal and Vice-Principal agree. Ms. Schweder also serves on the Ontario Advisory Board Schools Committee with Detective Williamson and Mr. Auty.

At Hagersville Secondary, a ten-person Student Board of Directors meets monthly with Ms. Schweder and they work towards organizing fund-raising projects, developing publicity for their program, and determining the reward amounts to be paid to tipsters. The local Police Co-ordinators from the community Crime Stoppers program attend these monthly meetings as non-voting members.

Innumerable Student Crime Stoppers programs are being developed in Ontario secondary schools and several have reported positive results similar to those experienced at Hagersville Secondary School.

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